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THE MAKING OF ENGLAND.

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BY

JOHN RICHARD GREEN, M.A., LL.D.,

HONORARY FELLOW OF JESUS COLLEGE, OXFORD.

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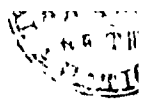

PREFACE.

THE present work is only a partial realization of an old-standing project of mine, for it is now some ten or twelve years since I made collections for, and actually began a history of England up to the Norman Conquest. This work, however, was interrupted by the preparation of my *Short History*, and has since been further delayed by my revision and expansion of that book; and now that my hands are free the state of my health forbids my carrying out this earlier plan in its full extent. I have thought it better, therefore, to gather up and complete what I could of the history of the earlier times up to the union of England under Ecgberht, and this the more because these years form a distinct period in our national history whose interest and importance has I think still to be fully recognized. They form in fact the period of the Making of England, the age during which our fathers conquered and settled over the soil of Britain, and in which their political and social life took the form

which it still retains. The centuries of administrative organization which stretch from Ecgberht to Edward the First, the age of full national developement which extends from Edward's day to our own, only become fully intelligible to us when we have fully grasped this age of national formation. I cannot but feel, therefore, that it is no slight misfortune that such a period should remain comparatively unknown, and that its struggles, which were in reality the birth-throes of our national life, should be still to most Englishmen, as they were to Milton, mere battles of kites and of crows.

Whether I have succeeded in setting these struggles in a truer and a more interesting light, my readers must decide. The remoteness of the events, the comparative paucity of historical materials, no doubt make such an undertaking at the best a hazardous one; and one of the wisest of my friends, who is at the same time the greatest living authority on our early history, warned me at the outset against the attempt to construct a living portraiture of times which so many previous historians, themselves men of learning and ability, had left dead. Nothing but my own vivid interest in the subject could have encouraged me in spite of such a warning to attempt to convey its interest to others. In doing so, however, I have largely availed myself of some resources which have been hitherto, I think, unduly neglected.

Archæological researches on the sites of villas and towns, or along the line of road or dyke, often furnish us with evidence even more trustworthy than that of written chronicle; while the ground itself, where we can read the information it affords, is, whether in the account of the Conquest or in that of the Settlement of Britain, the fullest and the most certain of documents. Physical geography has still its part to play in the written record of that human history to which it gives so much of its shape and form; and in the present work I have striven, however imperfectly, to avail myself of its aid. Even Bæda has supplied me with new material. Freely as he has been used for the ecclesiastical and political history of his time, the social information which lies scattered up and down his work has been left comparatively untouched. Bæda was no Gregory of Tours; the seclusion of his life, and his relation to the race whose history he drew, precluded him from giving us such a picture of our forefathers as the bishop-statesman of Tours was enabled by his position and the difference of his Roman blood to give of the Frankish conquerors of Gaul. But, in spite of this, Bæda incidentally tells us much, and a careful gleaning of these incidental facts gives us at any rate glimpses into the social life of England in the seventh and eighth centuries which can hardly fail to make the time more real to us.

The maps, in which I have endeavoured for the first time to trace the boundaries of the various English powers at different epochs, will no doubt be found in some respects susceptible of correction. The grounds on which the main lines of division are drawn I have stated in my book;—what I wish to explain here is, that in some of the minor details of these maps I have been driven by the absence of information to rely on what seemed to me the probabilities of things, or the natural conclusion to be drawn from other facts of the time. This is especially the case in the boundary line between the English and the Britons. The battle of Deorham brought the conquerors to the Severn, while in Wulfhere's day they had reached the western border of Herefordshire; but there is nothing to tell us by what steps during the century that elapsed they had advanced from the one point to the other. Under these circumstances I could only represent them in the maps that touched on the intervening period as advancing gradually from the Severn to the Wye. We are in the same utter darkness as to the advance of the English over the upper valley of the Severn. At the end of the sixth century, their March or borderland only reached to the line of water-parting which forms the eastern boundary of that vale, and we hear nothing of their advance over it till almost the close of the eighth century, when the conquests of Offa

carry their frontier to Offa's Dyke on the west of Shropshire. Here, however, the map itself helps us. Cheshire had become English at the beginning of the seventh century, while Herefordshire was English by the middle of it, and a glance at the map will show how inevitably these two facts imply a corresponding advance of the intervening frontier, as I have drawn it, to the course of the Severn. In the same way we have hardly anything to throw light on the advance of the West-Saxons across Dorsetshire. All we know is, that it could not have begun till about the middle of the sixth century, and that it was certainly completed by the beginning of the eighth. Difficulties of another kind presented themselves in accurately defining the political relations of one or two of the smaller states, such as Sussex or Essex, about which through long periods of time we have little or no information. Here I have been compelled to assume that their political course during the years in which it is unknown to us was mainly the same as in the years in which it is known;—in other words, that when not known to be subject to any other power, Sussex owned the supremacy of the West-Saxons, and Essex followed the fortunes of East-Anglia.

I may add, in explanation of the reappearance of a few passages, relating principally to ecclesiastical matters, which my readers may have seen before, that

where I had little or nothing to add or to change I have preferred to insert a passage from previous work, with the requisite corrections and references, to the affectation of rewriting such a passage for the mere sake of giving it an air of novelty.

JOHN RICHARD GREEN.

MENTONE, *November*, 1881.

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THE MAKING OF ENGLAND.

INTRODUCTION.

BRITAIN AND ITS FOES.

The Roman Conquest.

THE island of Britain was the latest of Rome's conquests in the west. Though it had been twice attacked by Julius Cæsar, his withdrawal and the inaction of the earlier Emperors promised it a continued freedom; but a hundred years after Cæsar's landing, Claudius undertook its conquest, and so swiftly was the work carried out by his generals and those of his successor that before thirty years were over the bulk of the country had passed beneath the Roman sway.[1] The island was thus fortunate in the moment of its conquest. It was spared the pillage and exactions which ruined the

[1] In these few introductory pages I need scarcely say that I do not attempt to write a history of Roman Britain. Such a history, indeed, can hardly be attempted with any profit till the scattered records of researches amongst the roads, villas, tombs, etc., of this period have been in some way brought together and made accessible. What I attempt is simply to note those special features of the Roman rule which have left their impress on our after history.

INTROD. Britain and its Foes.

provinces of Rome under the Republic, while it felt little of the evils which still clung to their administration under the earlier Empire. The age in which its organisation was actively carried out was the age of the Antonines, when the provinces became objects of special care on the part of the central government,[1] and when the effects of its administration were aided by peace without and a profound tranquillity within. The absence of all record of the change indicates the quietness and ease with which Britain was transformed into a Roman province. A census and a land-survey must have formed here, as elsewhere, indispensable preliminaries for the exaction of the poll-tax and the land-tax which were the main burdens of Rome's fiscal system. Within the province the population would, in accordance with her invariable policy, be disarmed; while a force of three legions was stationed, partly in the north to guard against the unconquered Britons, and partly in the west to watch over the tribes which still remained half subdued. Though the towns were left in some measure to their own self-government, the bulk of the island seems to have been ruled by military and financial administrators, whose powers were practically unlimited. But rough as their rule may have been, it secured peace and good order; and peace and good order were all that was needed to ensure material

[1] Capitolinus says of Antoninus Pius:—"With such diligence did he rule the subject peoples that he cared for all men and all things as his own. All the provinces flourished under him." Hadrian's solicitude was shown by his ceaseless wanderings over the whole Empire, and by the general system of border fortifications of which his Wall in Britain formed a part.

development. This development soon made itself felt. Commerce sprang up in the ports of Britain. Its harvests became so abundant that it was able at need to supply the necessities of Gaul. Tin mines were worked in Cornwall, lead mines in Somerset and Northumberland, and iron mines in the Forest of Dean. The villas and homesteads which, as the spade of our archæologists proves, lay scattered over the whole face of the country, show the general prosperity of the island.

Roman Towns.

The extension of its road system, and the upgrowth of its towns, tell above all how rapidly Britain was incorporated into the general body of the Empire. The beacon-fire which blazed on the cliffs of Dover to guide the vessels from the Gaulish shores to the port of Richborough proclaimed the union of Britain with the mainland; while the route which crossed the downs of Kent from Richborough to the Thames linked the roads that radiated from London over the surface of the island with the general net-work of communications along which flowed the social and political life of the Roman world. When the Emperor Hadrian traversed these roads at the opening of the second century, a crowd of towns had already risen along their course.[1] In the south-east Durovernum,

[1] The bulk of these towns undoubtedly occupied British sites, and were probably only modifications of communities which had already taken a municipal shape in the interval of rapid native development between the landing of Cæsar and the landing of Claudius. But these, after all, can have been little more than collections of huts, like the Gaulish communities which had risen under like circumstances, and the difference between such a community and the meanest Roman town was even materially immense.

INTROD. Britain and its Foes.

the later Canterbury, connected Richborough with London. In the south-west Venta or Winchester formed the centre of the Gwent, or open downs of our Hampshire; while gouty provincials found their way to the hot springs of Bath, and Exeter looked out from its rise over the Exe on the wild moorlands of the Cornish peninsula. Colchester and Norwich stand on the sites of Roman cities which gathered to them the new life of the eastern coast; and Lindum has left its name to the Lincolnshire which was formed in later days around its ruins. Names as familiar meet us if we turn to central Britain. The uplands of the Cotswolds were already crowned with the predecessor of our Cirencester, as those of Hertfordshire were crowned by that of our St. Alban's; while Leicester represents as early a centre of municipal life in the basin of the Trent. Even on the skirts of the province life and industry sheltered themselves under the Roman arms. A chain of lesser places studded the road from York to the savage regions of the north, where the eagles of a legion protected the settlers who were spreading to the Forth and the Clyde. Caerleon sprang from the quarters of another legion which held down the stubborn freedom that lingered among the mountains of Wales, and guarded the towns which were rising at Gloucester and Wroxeter in the valley of the Severn; while Chester owes its existence to the station of a third on the Dee, whose work was to bridle the tribes of North Wales and of Cumbria.[1]

[1] It is in the age of the Antonines that we first get a detailed knowledge of Britain in the geographical survey of Ptolemy,

Britain and its Foes.

Imperfect civilization of Britain.

It is easy, however, to exaggerate the civilization of Britain. Even within the province south of the Firths the evidence of inscriptions[1] shows that large tracts of country lay practically outside the Roman life. Though no district was richer or more peopled than the south-west, our Devonshire and our Cornwall seem to have remained almost wholly Celtic. Wales was never really Romanized; its tribes were held in check by the legionaries at Chester and Caerleon, but as late as the beginning of the third century they called for repression from the Emperor Severus as much as the Picts.[2] The valleys of the Thames and of the Severn were fairly inhabited, but there are fewer proofs of Roman settlement in the valley of the Trent; and though the southern part of Yorkshire was rich and populous, Northern Britain as a whole was little touched by the new civilization. And even in the south this civilization can have had but little depth or vitality. Large and important as were some of its towns, hardly any inscriptions have been found to tell of the presence of a vigorous municipal life. Unlike its neighbour Gaul, Britain contributed nothing

which gives us the towns of the native tribes (Monum. Hist. Brit., pp. x.—xvi.); and in the account of its roads and towns given in the Antonine Itinerary (Ibid. xx.—xxii.). A few milestones survive, and the names of Hadrian and Antoninus Pius which they bear fix the general date of this road-making.

[1] See Hübner, "Inscriptiones Britanniæ Latinæ" (forming the seventh volume of the "Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum," published at Berlin, 1873), a book which must furnish the groundwork of any history of Roman Britain.

[2] There are very few inscriptions of Roman date from Devon and Cornwall; none from Wales.

INTROD. Britain and its Foes.

to the intellectual riches of the Empire; and not one of the poets or rhetoricians of the time is of British origin. Even moral movements found little foothold in the island. When Christianity became the religion of the Empire under the house of Constantine, Britain must have become nominally Christian; and the presence of British bishops at ecclesiastical councils is enough to prove that its Christianity was organized in the ordinary form.[1] But as yet no Christian inscription or ornament has been found in any remains of earlier date than the close of the Roman rule; and the undoubted existence of churches at places such as Canterbury, or London, or St. Albans, only gives greater weight to the fact that no trace of such buildings has been found in the sites of other cities which have been laid open by archæological research.

Its life mainly military.

Far indeed as was Britain from the centre of the Empire, had the Roman energy wielded its full force in the island it would have Romanized Britain as completely as it Romanized the bulk of Gaul. But there was little in the province to urge Rome to such an effort. It was not only the most distant of all her western provinces, but it had little natural wealth, and it was vexed by a ceaseless border warfare with the unconquered Britons, the Picts, or Caledonians, beyond the northern Firths. There was little in its material resources to tempt men to that immigration

[1] Stubbs and Haddan ("Councils of Great Britain," i. 1–40), have collected the few facts which form the meagre evidence for the existence of Christianity in Britain. Even of this meagre list some are doubted by so competent an observer as Mr. Raine ("Historians of the Church of York," Introd. p. xx. *note*).

from the older provinces of the Empire which was the main agent in civilizing a new conquest. On the contrary, the harshness of a climate that knew neither olive nor vine deterred men of the south from such a settlement. The care with which every villa is furnished with its elaborate system of hot-air flues shows that the climate of Britain was as intolerable to the Roman provincial as that of India, in spite of punkahs and verandas, is to the English civilian or the English planter. The result was that the province remained a mere military department of the Empire. The importance of its towns was determined by military considerations. In the earliest age of the occupation, when the conquerors aimed at a hold on the districts near to Gaul, Colchester, Verulam, and London were the greatest of British towns. As the tide of war rolled away to the north and west, Chester and Caerleon rivalled their greatness, and York became the capital of the province. It is a significant fact that the bulk of the monuments which have been found in Britain relate to military life. Its inscriptions and tombs are mostly those of soldiers. Its mightiest work was the great Wall and line of legionary stations which guarded the province from the Picts. Its only historic records are records of border forays against the barbarians. If we strive to realize its character from the few facts that we possess, we are forced to look on Britain as a Roman Algeria.

Physical aspect of Britain.

It was not merely its distance from the seat of rule or the later date of its conquest that hindered the province from passing completely into the general body of the Empire. Its physical and its social circum-

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stances offered yet greater obstacles to any effectual civilization. Marvellous as was the rapid transformation of Britain in the hands of its conquerors, and greatly as its outer aspect came to differ from that of the island in which Claudius landed, it was far from being in this respect the land of later days. In spite of its roads, its towns, and its mining-works, it remained, even at the close of the Roman rule, an "isle of blowing woodland," a wild and half-reclaimed country, the bulk of whose surface was occupied by forest and waste. The rich and lower soil of the river valleys, indeed, which is now the favourite home of agriculture, had in the earliest times been densely covered with primæval scrub; and the only open spaces were those whose nature fitted them less for the growth of trees, the chalk downs and oolitic uplands that stretched in long lines across the face of Britain from the Channel to the Northern sea. In the earliest traces of our history these districts became the seats of a population and a tillage which have long fled from them as the gradual clearing away of the woodland drew men to the richer soil. Such a transfer of population seems faintly to have begun even before the coming of the Romans; and the roads which they drove through the heart of the country, the waste caused by their mines, the ever-widening circle of cultivation round their towns, must have quickened this social change. But even after four hundred years of their occupation the change was far from having been completely brought about. It is mainly in the natural clearings of the uplands that the population concentrated itself at

the close of the Roman rule, and it is over these districts that the ruins of the villas or country houses of the Roman landowners are most thickly scattered.

Such spaces were found above all at the extremities of the great chalk ranges which give form and character to the scenery of southern Britain. Halfway along our southern coast the huge block of upland which we know as Salisbury plain and the Marlborough downs rises in gentle undulations from the alluvial flat of the New Forest to the lines of escarpment which overlook the Vale of Pewsey and the upper basin of the Thames. From the eastern side of this upland three ranges of heights run athwart southern Britain to the north-east and the east, the first passing from the Wiltshire downs by the Chilterns to the uplands of East-Anglia, while the second and third diverge to form the north downs of Surrey or the south downs of Sussex. At the extremities of these lines of heights the upland broadens out into spaces which were seized on from the earliest times for human settlement. The downs of our Hampshire formed a "Gwent" or open clearing, whose name still lingers in its "Gwentceaster" or Winchester; while the upland which became the later home of the North-folk and South-folk formed another and a broader "Gwent" which gave its name to the Gwenta of the Iceni, the predecessor of our Norwich. The North Downs as they neared the sea widened out in their turn into a third upland that still preserves its name of the Caint or Kent, and whose broad front ran from the cliffs of Thanet to those of Dover and Folkestone. Free spaces of the same

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character were found on the Cotswolds or on the Wolds of Lincoln and York; and in all we find traces of early culture and of the presence of a population which has passed away as tillage was drawn to richer soils.

The Waste and Fen.

The transfer of culture and population, indeed, had begun before the conquest of Claudius;[1] and the position of many Roman towns shows how busily it was carried on through the centuries of Roman rule. But even at the close of this rule the clearings along the river valleys were still mere strips of culture which threaded their way through a mighty waste. To realize the Britain of the Roman age we must set before us the Poland or Northern Russia of our own; a country into whose tracts of forest-land man is still hewing his way, and where the clearings round town or village hardly break the reaches of silent moorlands or as silent fens. The wolf roamed over the long "desert" that stretched from the Cheviots to the Peak. Beavers built in the streams of marshy hollows such as that which reached from Beverley to Ravenspur.[2] The wild bull wandered through forest after forest from Ettrick to Hampstead.[3] Though the Roman engineers won fields from Romney marsh on the Kentish coast, nothing broke the solitude of the peat-bogs which stretched up the Parrett into the

[1] Raine, "Historians of the Church of York," Introd. pp. ix., x.

[2] Boyd Dawkins, "Cave-Hunting," pp. 76, 132.

[3] Even in the twelfth century the forest district north of London was full of wild boars and wild oxen, "latebræ . . . aprorum et taurorum sylvestrium." FitzStephen's Life of Becket; in Giles, "St. Thom. Cant." i. 173.

heart of Somersetshire, of the swamp which struck into the heart of the island along the lower Trent, or of the mightier fen along the eastern coast, the Wash which then ran inland up the Witham all but to Lincoln, and up the Nen and the Cam as far as Huntingdon and Cambridge.[1]

The Woodland.

But neither moor nor fen covered so vast a space of Britain as its woods.[2] The wedge of forest and scrub that filled the hollow between the North and South Downs stretched in an unbroken mass for a hundred and twenty miles, from Hampshire to the valley of the Medway; but, huge as it was, this "Andredsweald" was hardly greater than other of the woodlands which covered Britain. A line of thickets along the shore of the Southampton Water linked it with as large a forest-tract to the west, a fragment of which survives in our New Forest, but which then bent away through the present Dorsetshire and spread northward round the western edge of the Wiltshire downs to the valley of the Frome. The line of the Severn was blocked above Worcester by the forest of Wyre, which extended northward to Cheshire; while the Avon skirted the border of a mighty woodland, of which Shakspere's Arden became the dwindled representative, and which all but covered the area of the present Warwickshire. Away to the east the rises of Highgate and Hampstead formed the southern

[1] Pearson, "Historical Maps of England," p. 3.

[2] See Guest, "Early English Settlements in Britain" (Salisbury volume of Proceedings of Archæological Institute), pp. 31, 32. I shall deal more at large with these swamps and woodlands as we meet them in our story.

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edge of a forest-tract that stretched without a break to the Wash, and thus almost touched the belt of woodland which ran athwart mid-Britain in the forests of Rockingham and Charnwood, and in the Brunewald of the Lincoln heights. The northern part of the province was yet wilder and more inaccessible than the part to the south; for while Sherwood and Needwood filled the space between the Peak and the Trent, the Vale of York was pressed between the moorlands of Pickering and the waste or "desert" that stretched from the Peak of Derbyshire to the Roman wall; and beyond the wall to the Forth the country was little more than a vast wilderness of moorland and woodland which later times knew as the forest of Selkirk.

Divisions among Provincials.

As we follow its invaders step by step across Britain, we shall see how wide these forests were, and what hindrances they threw in the way of its assailants. But they must have thrown almost as great hindrances in the way of its civilization. The cities of the province indeed were thoroughly Romanized. Within the walls of towns such as Lincoln or York, towns governed by their own municipal officers, guarded by massive walls, and linked together by the network of roads which reached from one end of the island to the other, law, language, political and social life, all were of Rome. But if the towns were thoroughly Romanized, it seems doubtful, from the few facts that remain to us, whether Roman civilization had made much impression on the bulk of the provincials, or whether the serf-like husbandmen whose cabins clustered round the luxurious villas of the

provincial landowners, or the yet more servile miners of Northumbria and the Forest of Dean, were touched by the arts and knowledge of their masters. The use of the Roman language may be roughly taken as marking the progress of the Roman civilization; and though Latin had all but wholly superseded the languages of the conquered peoples in Spain and Gaul, its use was probably limited in Britain to the townsfolk and to the wealthier proprietors without the towns. Over large tracts of country the rural Britons seem to have remained apart from their conquerors, not only speaking their own language, and owning some traditional allegiance to their native chiefs, but retaining their native system of law. Imperial edicts had long since extended Roman citizenship to every dweller within the Empire; but the wilder provincials may have been suffered to retain in some measure their own usages, as the Zulu or the Maori is suffered to retain them, though subject in theory to British law, and entitled to the full privileges of British subjects. The Welsh laws which we possess in a later shape are undoubtedly in the main the same system of early customs which Rome found existing among the Britons in the days of Claudius and Cæsar;[1] and the fact that they remained a living law when her legions withdrew proves their continuance throughout the four hundred years of her rule, as it proves the practical isolation from Roman life and Roman civilization of the native communities which preserved them.

The dangers that sprang from such a severance

[1] Sir H. Maine, "Early History of Institutions," p. 6.

INTROD. Britain and its Foes. *Inroads of the Picts.*

between the two elements of its population must have been stirred into active life by the danger which threatened Britain from the north. No Roman ruler had succeeded in reducing the districts beyond the Firths; and the Britons who had been sheltered from the Roman sword by the fastnesses of the Highlands were strong enough from the opening of the second century to turn fiercely on their opponents. The wall which the Emperor Hadrian drew across the moors from Newcastle to Carlisle marks the first stage in a struggle with these Caledonians or Picts which lasted to the close of the Roman rule. But even without such a barrier the disciplined soldiers of the Empire could easily have held at bay enemies such as these: and when we find the Picts penetrating in the midst of the fourth century into the heart of Britain, it can hardly have been without the aid of disaffection within the province itself. For such disaffection the same causes must have existed in Britain as we know to have existed in Gaul. The purely despotic system of the Roman government crushed all local vigour by crushing local independence: and here as elsewhere population was no doubt declining as the area of slave-culture widened with the sinking of the labourer into a serf. If the mines were worked by forced labour, they would have been a source of endless oppression; while town and country alike were drained by heavy taxation, and industry fettered by laws that turned every trade into an hereditary caste. But the disaffection which backed the Pictish invader found a firmer ground-work in Britain than in other imperial districts which suffered from the same

misrule. Once within the province the Picts would meet kindred of their own, who though conquered were hardly more Romanized than themselves, and whom a jealousy of the Romanized townsfolk might easily rouse to arms. That such a division between its inhabitants broke the strength of Britain at a later time is nearly certain; that it had begun in the middle of the fourth century is probable from the character of the Pictish inroad which all but tore Britain from the Empire in the reign of Valentinian. The inroad was met by his general, Theodosius, and the Picts driven back to their mountains; but Theodosius had found southern Britain itself in possession of the invaders.[1] Raids so extensive as this could hardly have been effected without aid from within; and the social condition of the island was such that help from within may have been largely given.

The Picts however were far from being the only enemies who were drawn at this moment to the plunder of the province. While their clans surged against the Roman wall, the coasts of Britain were being harried by marauders from the sea. The boats of Irish pirates—or as they were then called, Scots—ravaged its western shores, while a yet more formidable race of freebooters pillaged from Portsmouth to the Wash. In their homeland between the Elbe and the Ems, as well as in a wide tract across the Ems to the Rhine, a number of German tribes had drawn together into the people of the Saxons, and it was to

The Saxons.

[1] Ammianus Marcellinus, lib. xxvii. cc. 8, 9. (Monum. Hist. Brit. p. lxxiii.)

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this people that the pirates of the Channel belonged.[1] Chance has preserved for us in a Sleswick peat-bog one of the war-keels of these early seamen. The boat is flat-bottomed, seventy feet long, and eight or nine feet wide, its sides of oak-boards fastened with bark-ropes and iron bolts. Fifty oars drove it over the waves with a freight of warriors whose arms, axes, swords, lances, and knives were found heaped together in its hold.[2] Like the galleys of the Middle Ages, such boats could only creep cautiously along from harbour to harbour in rough weather; but in smooth water their swiftness fitted them admirably for the piracy by which the men of these tribes were already making themselves dreaded. Its flat bottom enabled them to beach the vessel on any fitting coast; and a step on shore at once transformed the boatmen into a war-band.

Their piracy.

A letter which a Roman provincial, Sidonius Apollinaris, wrote in warning to a friend who had embarked as an officer in the Channel fleet, which was "looking out for the pirate-boats of the Saxons," gives us a glimpse of these freebooters as they appeared to the civilized world of the fifth century. "When[3] you see their rowers," says Sidonius, "you may make up your mind that every one of them is an arch pirate, with such wonderful unanimity do all of them at once command, obey, teach, and

[1] Their first recorded appearance off the coast of Gaul is in A.D. 287. Eutropius, ix. 21. (Monum. Hist. Brit. lxxii.)

[2] Lubbock, "Prehistoric Times," pp. 8, 9.

[3] Sidon. Apollin. Epist. viii. 6. (Migne, "Patrologia," vol. lviii. col. 597.)

learn their business of brigandage. This is why I have to warn you to be more than ever on your guard in this warfare. Your foe is of all foes the fiercest.[1] He attacks unexpectedly; if you expect him, he makes his escape; he despises those who seek to block his path; he overthrows those who are off their guard; he cuts off any enemy whom he follows; while, for himself, he never fails to escape when he is forced to fly. And more than this, to these men a shipwreck is a school of seamanship rather than a matter of dread. They know the dangers of the deep like men who are every day in contact with them. For since a storm throws those whom they wish to attack off their guard, while it hinders their own coming onset from being seen from afar, they gladly risk themselves in the midst of wrecks and sea-beaten rocks in the hope of making profit out of the very tempest." [2]

Their slave-hunting.

The picture is one of men who were not merely greedy freebooters but finished seamen, and who had learned, "barbarians" as they were, how to command and how to obey in their school of war. But it was not the daring or the pillage of the Saxons that spread terror along the Channel so much as their cruelty. It was by this that the Roman provincials

[1] "Hostis est omni hoste truculentior."

[2] Cf. Sidon. Apollin. Carm. vii. (Monum. Hist. Brit. p. c.).

"Quin et Aremoricus piratam Saxona tractus
Sperabat, cui pelle salum sulcare Britannum
Ludus, et assuto glaucum mare findere lembo."

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distinguished them[1] from the rest of the German races who were attacking the Empire; for while men noted in the Frank his want of faith, in the Alan his greed, in the Hun his shamelessness, in the Gepid an utter absence of any trace of civilization, what they noted in the Saxon was his savage cruelty. It was this ruthlessness that made their descents on the coast of the Channel so terrible to the provincials. The main aim of these pirate-raids, as of the pirate-raids from the north, hundreds of years later, was man-hunting, the carrying off of men, women, and children, into slavery. But the slave-hunting of the Saxons had features of peculiar horror. "Before they raise anchor and set sail from the hostile continent for their own homeland, their wont when they are on the eve of returning is to slay by long and painful tortures one man in every ten of those they have taken, in compliance with a religious use which is even more lamentable than superstitious; and for this purpose to gather the whole crowd of doomed men together, and temper the injustice of their fate by the mock justice of casting lots for the victims. Though such a rite is not so much a sacrifice that cleanses as a sacrilege that defiles them, the doers of this deed of blood deem it a part of their religion rather to torture their captives than to take ransom for them."[2]

[1] Salvian, de Gubernatione Dei, iv. 14. "Gens Saxonum fera est, Francorum infidelis, Gepidarum inhumana, Chunorum impudica," etc.

[2] "Mos est remeaturis decimum quemque captorum (*caprorum Migne*) per æquales et cruciarias pœnas, plus ob hoc tristi quam superstitioso ritu, necare; superque collectam turbam perituroram,

From the close of the third century the raids of these Saxons had been felt along the coasts of Gaul, and a fleet which appears from this time in the Channel must have been manned to resist them. It is not however till the year 364[1] that we hear of them as joining in any attack upon Britain itself; but from this moment their ravages seem to have been ceaselessly carried on, and their presence off its shores became one among the pressing difficulties which the country had to meet. For the road between Britain and Rome lay across the Channel: and the occupation of the waters or coasts of the Channel by a pirate fleet was not only fatal to the trade of the province with the European mainland, but threatened its connection with the central government, and cut it off from the body of the Empire. It is to the years therefore that followed this joint attack of Saxon and Pict that we must look for the date of two measures

Saxons in the Channel.

mortis iniquitatem sortis æquitate dispergere. Talibus eligunt votis, victimis solvunt; et per hujusmodi non tam sacrificia purgati quam sacrilegia polluti, religiosum putant cædis infaustæ perpetratores de capite captivo magis exigere tormenta quam pretia."

I have ventured to base my version of this letter on a spirited though free translation given by Mr. Hodgkin in "Italy and her Invaders," vol. ii. 365. The "cruciarias pœnas," which Mr. Hodgkin renders "crucifixion," are more probably something like the "spread-eagle" of the later Northmen.

[1] "Cum (Carausius) per tractum Belgicæ et Armoricæ pacandum mare accepisset quod Franci et Saxones infestabant." Eutrop. (Monum. Hist. Brit. p. lxxii.); Ammianus Marcellinus, lib. xxvi. c. 4. "Hoc tempore . . . Picti Saxonesque et Scoti et Attacotti Britannos ærumnis vexavere continuis." (Monum. Hist. Brit. p. lxxiii.)

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which mark what we may term a change of front in the military administration of Britain. It was probably now that her greater towns strengthened themselves with walls, a change which implied dread of an attack from which the Roman troops might be unable to defend them; while the pressure of the Saxons, as well as the district on which it told, is marked by the organization of the coast from the Wash to Southampton Water under an officer who bore the title of "Count of the Maritime Tract," or "of the Saxon Shore."[1]

The Saxon Shore.

It was here that Britain lay most open to the pirates' forays. Unguarded by the cliffs and bleak moorlands that ran northward along the coast from the Humber to the Tweed, or by forests such as lined the shore from Portsmouth to the west, the tract which was known as the Saxon Shore presented along its whole line natural features that

[1] In the full description of his office and troops ("Notitia utriusque Imperii," Mon. Hist. Brit. xxiv.) the style of this officer is "Comes Limitis Saxonici per Britanniam." Elsewhere (Ibid. xxiii.) he is informally "Comes Littoris Saxonici per Britannias." The arguments of Lappenberg (Anglo-Saxon Kings, ed. 1881, i. 57, 58), Kemble (Saxons in England, i. pp. 10, 11, 14), and others for an earlier date for this shore, as well as for the derivation of the name from a Saxon settlement along it rather than its use as a barrier against Saxon descents, though still maintained by Mr. Skene ("Celtic Scotland," vol. i. p. 151), have been satisfactorily refuted by Dr. Guest (E. E. Set. p. 33 *et seq.*), whose judgment is adopted by Mr. Freeman (Norm. Conq. i. 11, note), and by Professor Stubbs (Constit. Hist. i. 67, note). The "Notitia Imperii," in which alone the term is found, was drawn up about A.D. 400; possibly in 403. (Hodgson Hinde, Hist. of Northumberland, i. part 1, pp. 18, 19.)

invited and favoured attack. Its sea-brim was fringed with marshy islands or low tracts of alluvial soil which offered secure points of landing or anchorage, and broken by large estuaries whose waters gave access to the country behind them; while from these lower parts the land rose within into downs and uplands which were at once easy to overrun and favourable for settlement. But the measures of defence which were now taken more than compensated for the natural weakness of the island in this quarter. The coast was lined with strong fortresses.[1] At Brancaster in Norfolk the northernmost of these watched the inlet of the Wash and guarded the East-Anglian downs. In our Suffolk a stronghold now known as Burgh Castle blocked the estuary of the Yare, as the walls of Colchester barred the inlet of the Stour. Othona, a fortress at the mouth of the Blackwater, protected the southern flats of our Essex; while London forbade all passage up the Thames. Kent was the most vital point of all, for through it passed the line of communication between Britain and Rome; and a group of fortresses, admirably disposed, protected this passage. One guarded Richborough, which was the common port for all traffic from Gaul; a second at Reculver held the entrance of the sea-channel

[1] The list is given in the "Notitia Imperii" (Mon. Hist. Brit. xxiv.), with the disposition of the troops in each fortress. London, and the towns at Canterbury and Rochester, though backing this line of defence, were not subject to the Count of the Saxon Shore.

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which then parted Thanet from the mainland, and through which vessels passed to London by the estuary of the Thames; while walled towns on the site of our Canterbury and of our Rochester protected the points at which the road from Richborough to London passed the Stour and the Medway.[1] Three other fortresses held the coast of the Channel as far as the great woods which hindered all landing to the west. Lymne guarded the lowlands of Kent and the reclaimed tracts of Romney Marsh; Anderida, the modern Pevensey, held our Sussex; while Porchester marks the site of a castle which looked over the Southampton water, and blocked the road to the Downs.

Withdrawal of Romans from Britain.

Garrisoned as they were by a force of at least ten thousand men, the legion placed at the command of the Count of the Saxon Shore, these fortresses were too strong a barrier for the pirates to break; and we may set aside the theories which, in ignorance of the military strength of the Empire and of its hold over the provinces, suppose them to have conquered and settled here for centuries before the close of the Roman rule. Up to the moment indeed when the Imperial troops quitted Britain, we see them able easily to repel the attacks of its barbarous assailants. When a renewal of their inroads left Britain weak and exhausted at the accession of the Emperor Honorius, the Roman general Stilicho renewed the triumphs which Theo-

[1] The "Notitia" stations troops at Dover: but it is doubtful whether there was any Roman fortress there. Clark, "Dover Castle," Archæol. Journ. vol. xxxii. p. 440.

dosius had won.[1] The Pict was driven back afresh, the Saxon boats chased by his galleys as far as the Orkneys, and the Saxon Shore probably strengthened with fresh fortresses. But the campaign of Stilicho was the last triumph of the Empire in its western waters. The struggle Rome had waged so long drew in fact to its end; at the opening of the fifth century her resistance suddenly broke down; and the savage mass of barbarism with which she had battled broke in upon the Empire at a time when its force was sapped by internal decay. In its western dominions, where the German peoples were its foes, the triumph of its enemies was complete. The Franks conquered and colonized Gaul. The West-Goths conquered and colonized Spain. The Vandals founded a kingdom in Africa. The Burgundians encamped in the borderland between Italy and the Rhone. The East-Goths ruled at last in Italy itself. And now that the fated hour was come, the Saxons too closed upon their prey. The condition of the province invited their attack, for the strength of the Empire, broken everywhere by military revolts, was nowhere more broken than in Britain, where the two legions which remained quartered at Richborough and York set up more than once their chiefs as Emperors, and followed them across the Channel in a march upon Rome. The last of these pretenders, Constantine,

[1] Claudian, De tert. Consul. Honorii, ap. Mon. Hist. Brit. p. xcviii.

"Maduerunt Saxone fuso
Orcades; incaluit Pictorum sanguine Thule;
Scotorum cumulos flevit glacialis Ierne."

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crossed over to Gaul in 407 with the bulk of the soldiers quartered in Britain, and the province seems to have been left to its own defence; for it was no longer the legionaries, but "the people of Britain," who, "taking up arms," repulsed a new onset of the Barbarians. As the Empire was organized, such a rising in arms was a defiance of its laws and a practical overthrow of the whole system of government; and it was naturally followed by the expulsion of Constantine's officials and the creation of a civil administration on the part of the provincials. Independent however as they found themselves, they had no wish to break away from Rome. Their rising had been against a usurper: and they appealed to Honorius to accept their obedience and replace the troops. But the legions of the Empire were needed to guard Rome itself: and in 410 a letter of the Emperor bade Britain provide for its own government and its own defence.[1]

The British defence.

Few statements are more false than those which picture the British provincials as cowards, or their struggle against the barbarian as a weak and unworthy one. Nowhere, in fact, through the whole circuit of the Roman world, was so long and so desperate a resistance offered to the assailants of the Empire. Unaided as she was left, Britain held bravely out as soon as her first panic was over; and for some thirty years after the withdrawal of the legions the free province maintained an equal struggle against her foes.[2] Of these she probably

[1] Zozimus, lib. vi. c. 10, ap. Mon. Hist. Brit. p. lxxix.

[2] Later tradition attributed the Wall and the castles of the Saxon Shore to this time. Gildas (ed. Stevenson), Hist. sec. 18.

counted the Saxons as still the least formidable. The freebooters from Ireland were not only scourging her western coast, but planting colonies at points along its line. To the north of the Firth of Clyde these "Scots" settled about this time in the peninsula of Argyle. To the south of it they may have been the Gael who mastered and gave their name to Galloway; and there are some indications that a larger though a less permanent settlement was being made in the present North Wales. The Pict was an even more pressing danger. If he made no settlements, his raids grew fiercer and fiercer; and though once at least a general rising of despair drove him back from the very heart of the country,[1] as the fifth century wore on Britain was torn with a civil strife which made united resistance impossible. Its fortunes indeed at this time have reached us only in late and questionable traditions;[2] but there is

[1] Gildas (Hist. c. xx.) makes a fruitless appeal to the Empire precede this rally. As the letter is to "Agitio ter consuli," and Ætius was consul for the third time in 446, it cannot have been earlier than this date. (Guest, E. E. Set. 43.) For the political struggles, see Guest, ibid. 49, 50.

[2] Our only British informants for this period, as for the conquest that followed it, are Gildas ("Historia" and "Epistola," —really a single work; cf. Stubbs and Haddan, "Councils," i. p. 44) and Nennius ("Hist. Britonum"). Both are edited by Stevenson, and the first may be found in Mon. Hist. Brit. The genuineness of Gildas, which has been doubted, may now be looked on as established (see Stubbs and Haddan, "Councils of Britain," i. p. 44). Skene ("Celtic Scotland," i. 116, note) gives a critical account of the various biographies of Gildas. He seems to have been born in 516, probably in the North-Welsh valley of the Clwyd; to have left Britain for Armorica when thirty years old, or in 546; to have written his history

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much to confirm the main outline of the story which these traditions preserve. City and country, Roman part and native part, may well have risen in arms against one another; and under a leader of native blood the latter seem to have been successful over their Romanized opponents. But even this failed to unite the province when the Pict poured afresh over the Roman Wall and the boats of the Irish and English marauders appeared again off its coasts. The one course which seemed left was to imitate the fatal policy by which Rome had invited its doom while striving to avert it, the policy of matching barbarian against barbarian.[1] It was with this view that Britain turned to what seemed the weakest of her assailants, and strove to find among the freebooters who were harrying her eastern coast troops whom she could use as mercenaries against the Pict.

there about 556 or 560; to have crossed to Ireland between 566-569; and to have died there in 570. For the nature and date of the compilation which bears the name of Nennius, see Guest, "Early English Settlements," p. 36, and Stevenson's introduction to his edition of him. In its earliest form it is probably of the seventh century. Little, however, is to be gleaned from the confused rhetoric of Gildas; and it is only here and there that we can use the earlier facts which seem to be embedded among the later legends of Nennius.

[1] Gildas, Hist. c. 22, 23.

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CHAPTER I.

THE CONQUEST OF THE SAXON SHORE.

449—*c.* 500.

Landing of the Jutes.

In the year 449 or 450[1] a band of warriors was drawn to the shores of Britain by the usual pledges

[1] With Mr. Freeman and Mr. Stubbs I accept the argument of Dr. Guest ("Ear. Engl. Settlem. in S. Britain," p. 43, etc.) as conclusive in favour of the date 449 or 450 for this first settlement of the invaders. The date really rests on the authority of Gildas and of Bæda. The first places the coming of the strangers after the letter in which the Britons sought help from Ætius in his third consulship, *i.e.* in 446. Bæda, who generally follows Gildas in his story, fixes it in the reign of Marcian, which he believed to begin in 449, and which in his "English Chronicle" he had begun in 452, but which really began in 450 and ended in 457. Bæda's words (H. E. lib. i. c. 15) simply place the landing in Marcian's reign; but they were generally read as assigning it to the first year of his reign, and hence the English Chronicle, followed by later writers, assigned it to 449. The work of Nennius gives three other dates. One passage, added in the ninth century, and therefore of little weight, assigns it to 392. Another places it in 428. But the only important statement is one which Mr. Skene attributes to the work "as originally compiled in the seventh century," and which runs, "Regnante Gratiano secundo Equantio Romæ Saxones a Guorthigerno suscepti sunt anno (*quadringentesimo*, Stev.) trecentesimo

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of land and pay. The warriors were Jutes, men of a tribe which has left its name to Jutland, at the extremity of the peninsula that projects from the shores of North-Germany, but who were probably akin to the race that was fringing the opposite coast of Scandinavia and settling in the Danish Isles. In three "keels"—so ran the legend of their conquest—and with their Ealdormen, Hengest and Horsa, at their head, these Jutes landed at Ebbsfleet[1] in the Isle of Thanet.

With the landing of Hengest and his war-band English history begins.[2] We have no longer to watch

quadragesimo septimo post passionem Christi." (Nennius, ed. Stevenson, c. 31.) This would be 374, when Gratian was consul with Equitius; and probably arose from a confusion of the great inroad of the Saxons which occupied Theodosius in the first and second years of Gratian's rule, with their permanent landing in Britain. The arguments for these earlier dates have been recently restated in Skene, "Celtic Scotland," i. 146 *et seq.*

[1] "Eopwine's fleot," English Chronicle, a. 449. The older name for Thanet, Ruim, is preserved in the local name, Ramsgate.

[2] The story of the English conquest as a whole rests on the authority of the "English Chronicle," as to the general composition and value of which I shall speak more largely later on. The annals from 449 to the end of the English conquest—with which we are here concerned—were probably embodied in the Chronicle in the middle of the ninth century. "They represent," says Mr. Earle, "the gleanings and reconstruction of the half-lost early history of Wessex at the time of the first compilation in 855. Embodying antiquities of a high type, this section is not the oldest composition preserved in this Chronicle. It is such history as could still be made out of oral traditions, and it probably represents the collected information of the bardic memory, aided by the runic stones and the roll of kings." (Earle, "Two Parallel Chronicles," Introduction, p. ix.) Into some of these early entries a mythical element certainly enters (as in the names

the upgrowth of Roman life in a soil from which Roman life has been swept away, or to question the dim records of a vanished past in the vain hope of recalling the life that our fathers lived in their homeland by the Baltic. From the hour when they set foot on the sands of Thanet we follow the story of Englishmen in the land they made their own. There is little to catch the eye in Ebbsfleet itself, a mere lift of ground with a few grey cottages dotted over it, cut off nowadays from the sea by a reclaimed meadow and a sea-wall. Taken as a whole, indeed, the scene has a wild beauty of its own. To the right the white curve of Ramsgate cliffs looks down on the crescent of Pegwell Bay, while far away to the left across grey marsh-levels, where tiny smoke-wreaths mark the sites of Richborough and Sandwich, the coastline bends dimly to the fresh rise of cliffs beyond Deal. But a higher sense than that of beauty draws us to the landing-place of our fathers. No spot in Britain can be so sacred to Englishmen as that which first felt the tread of English feet. Everything in the character of the ground confirms the

of Port and Wightgar, eponyms of Portsmouth and Wightgaraburh or Carisbrook), and we may perhaps detect traces of "an artificial chronology in which eight and four are prevalent factors" (Earle, Par. Chron. Intr. p. ix.; see, however, on this matter, Guest, E. E. Set., Salisbury vol. of Archæol. Institute, p. 38 *et seq.*); but there is no real ground for the general scepticism as to the whole run of dates and facts expressed by writers such as Lappenberg (Angl. Sax. (1881) i. 97 *et seq*). See Stubbs (Constit. Hist. i. 46) and Guest (E. E. Set. pp. 38–42, etc.), whose conclusions are accepted by Mr. Freeman (Norm. Conq. i. 9, *note*). The later English accounts of this period, such as those of Asser, Ethelward, or Florence, are all based on the Chronicle.

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tradition which fixes this spot at Ebbsfleet; for great as the physical changes of the country have been since the fifth century, they have told little on its main features. At the time of Hengest's landing a broad inlet of sea parted Thanet from the mainland of Britain, for the marshes which stretch from Reculver to Sandwich were then, as they remained for centuries,[1] a wide sea-channel, hardly less than a mile across, through which vessels from Gaul commonly made their way into the estuary of the Thames. The mouth of this inlet was narrowed by two sandspits, now lost in the general level of the soil, but which at that time jutted out from either shore into the waves. On the southern spit stands the present town of Sandwich, while the northern is still known by the name of Ebbsfleet. If the war-ships of the pirates therefore were cruising off the coast at the moment when the bargain which gave them Thanet was struck, their disembarkation at Ebbsfleet, where they first touched its soil, was natural enough. The choice of the spot suggests too that their landing was a peaceful one. Richborough, a fortress whose broken ramparts rise hard by above the grey flats of Minster marsh, and which was then the common landing-place of travellers from Gaul, was too important a spot to have been left without a

[1] In Bæda's day this channel was about three furlongs wide (Bæda, H. E. lib. i. c. 25). The tolls of the ferry over it at Sarre were still valuable in Edward the Third's days; and it was not till the time of Henry the Seventh that the gradual silting up of the inlet forced Kent to replace the ferry by a bridge and road at this point (Archæol. Cantiana, vol. v. p. 306).

British garrison. Even if it had ceased to be the station of the fleet that guarded the Channel, it still commanded the road which ran through Kent to London; and some force must have replaced the legionary troops that held it when it was the head-quarters of the Count of the Saxon Shore. That no record remains of any encounter with these troops at Richborough may well have been because the Jutes who landed under Hengest landed not as enemies but as allies.

The Jutes in Thanet.

The after-course of events indeed seems to show that the choice of this landing-place was the result of a settled design.[1] Between the Briton and his hireling soldiers there could be little trust. Quarters in Thanet would satisfy the followers of Hengest,[2] who thus lay encamped within sight of their fellow-pirates in the Channel, and who felt themselves secured against the treachery which had often proved fatal to the Germans whom Rome called to her aid by the broad inlet that parted their camp from the mainland. But the choice was no less satisfactory to the provincial himself, trembling—and as the event proved, justly trembling—lest in his zeal against the Pict he had brought an even fiercer foe into Britain. For his dangerous allies were cooped in a corner of the land, and parted from the bulk of Britain by a sea-channel which was guarded by the strongest fortresses of the coast. The need of such precautions was seen in the disputes which arose as soon as the

[1] We are thrown here wholly on Gildas, sec. 23.

[2] Solinus speaks of Thanet as fruitful in cornfields. Mon. Hist. Brit. p. x.

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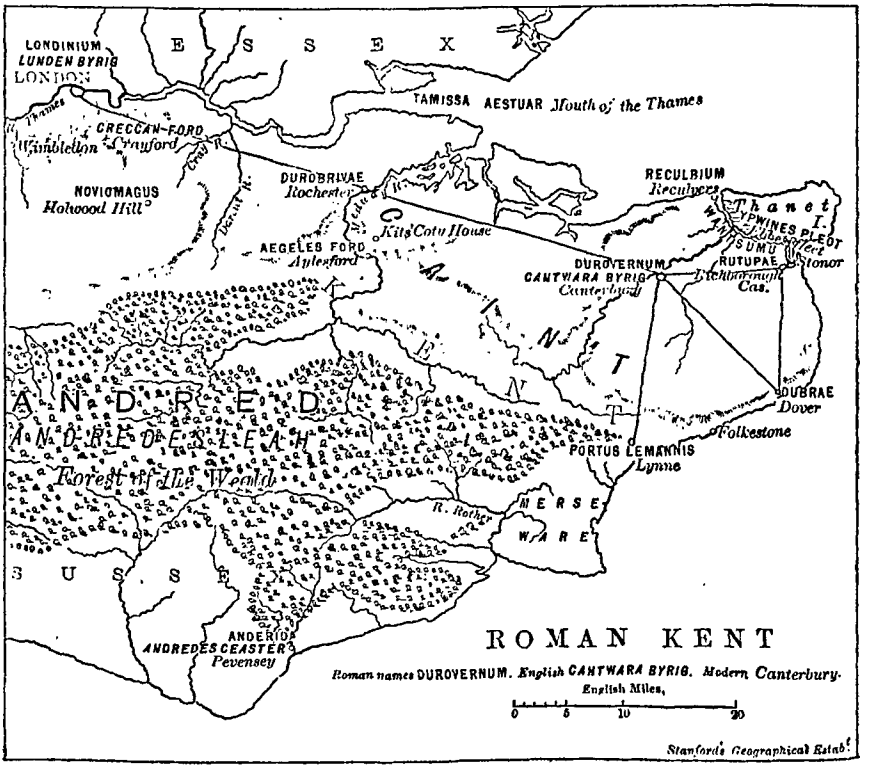
work for which the mercenaries had been hired was done. In the first years that followed after their landing, Jute and Briton fought side by side; and the Picts are said to have at last been scattered to the winds in a great battle on the eastern coast of Britain. But danger from the Pict was hardly over



when danger came from the Jutes themselves. Their numbers probably grew fast as the news of their settlement in Thanet spread among their fellow-pirates who were haunting the Channel; and with the increase of their number must have grown the difficulty of supplying them with rations and pay.

The dispute which rose over these questions was at last closed by Hengest's men with a threat of war. But the threat, as we have seen, was no easy one to carry out.[1] Right across their path in any attack upon Britain stretched the inlet of sea that parted Thanet from the mainland, a strait which was then traversable only at low water[2] by a long and dangerous ford and guarded at either mouth by fortresses. The channel of the Medway, with the forest of the Weald bending round from it to the south, furnished a second line of defence for our West Kent and Sussex; while the strongholds of Dover

Hengest's inroad.

[1] In tracing the English conquest of Kent, as in the conquest of Sussex and Wessex, I have been mainly guided by the researches of Dr. Guest ("Early English Settlements in South Britain," in the Salisbury volume of Proceedings of the Archæological Institute for 1849). I cannot, with Mr. Freeman, profess myself "an unreserved follower of that illustrious scholar;" for the advance of linguistic science has set aside many of the conclusions he has drawn from Welsh philology, while, in his researches into the history of the princes of North Wales and Damnonia, he has placed far too great a reliance on the documents, many spurious and all tampered with, contained in the Book of Llandaff. (For the real character of these documents, see Mr. Haddan's note in Haddan and Stubbs, "Councils," vol. i. p. 147.) But when these deductions are made, they do little to lessen the debt which our early history owes to Dr. Guest. By his combination of archæological research and knowledge of the ground, with an exact study of the meagre documentary evidence, he has not only restored, so far as they can be restored, many pages of a lost chapter of our history, that of the Conquest of Britain, but he has furnished a method for after inquirers, of which I have striven, however imperfectly, to avail myself in the pages that follow.

[2] Guest, E. E. Sett. p. 53, note. By Bæda's day this inlet was known to Englishmen as the Wantsum.

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and Lymne guarded their portion of the Saxon shore. Great however as these difficulties were, they failed to check the onset of the Jutes. From the spot at which the conflict between Hengest and the Britons took place in 455,[1] we may gather that his attack was a sudden one, and that the success of the invaders was due mainly to a surprise. The inlet may have been crossed before any force could be collected to oppose the English onset, or the boats of the Jutes may have pushed from the centre of it up the channel of its tributary, the Stour, itself at that time a wide and navigable estuary, to the town that stood on the site of our Canterbury, the town of Durovernum. Durovernum had grown up among the marshes of the Stour, a little cluster of houses raised above the morass on a foundation of piles. But small as the town was, it stood at a point where the roads from Richborough, Dover, and Reculver united to pass by a ford traversable at low water on their way to London; and the military importance of its position was marked by the rough oval of massive walls which lay about it. The strength of the place was doubled by the broad river channel that guarded it on the north-west and the marshy ground which stretched along its north-eastern side. In this quarter a Christian church had risen on a site destined to be occupied in after days by the Mother-Church of all England; while another church, that was to be hardly less memorable in our religious annals, lay without the walls of the town on the road to

[1] E. Chron. a. 455.

Richborough.[1] But neither wall nor marshes saved Durovernum from Hengest's onset, and the town was left in blackened and solitary ruin as the invaders pushed along the road to London.

Battle of Aylesford.

No obstacle seems to have checked their march from the Stour to the Medway. Passing over the heights which were crowned with the forest of Blean, they saw the road strike like an arrow past the line of Frodsham Creek through a rich and fertile district, where country houses and farms clustered thickly on either side of it, and where the burnt grain which is still found among their ruins may tell of the smoke-track that marked the Jutish advance.[2] As they passed the Swale however, and looked to their right over the potteries whose refuse still strews the mud-banks of Upchurch, their march seems to have swerved abruptly to the south. Whether they were drawn aside by greed of plunder, for the Medway valley was then, as now, one of the most fruitful and populous districts of the Caint, or whether they were forced by the guarded walls of the town which is now our Rochester[3] to turn southwards for a ford across the river, the march of the Jutes bent at this point along a ridge of low hills which forms the bound of the river-valley on the east. The country through which it led them was full of memories of a past which had even then faded from the minds of men;

[1] Fausett's "Canterbury till Domesday," Archæol. Journal, xxxii. 378; and "Roman Cemeteries in Canterbury," Archæol. Cantiana, iv. 27.

[2] Murray's "Kent," p. 70, of remains at Hartlip.

[3] See G. T. Clark, "Rochester Castle," Archæol. Jour. xxxii. 207.

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for the hill-slopes which they traversed were the grave-ground of a vanished race, and scattered among the boulders that strewed the soil rose cromlechs and huge barrows of the dead. One mighty relic survives in the monument now called Kit's Coty House, a cromlech which had been linked in old days by an avenue of huge stones to a burial-ground some few miles off near the village of Addington. It was from a steep knoll on which the grey, weather-beaten stones of this monument are reared, that the view of their first battle-ground would break on Hengest's warriors; and a lane which still leads down from it through peaceful homesteads would guide them across the river-valley to a ford which has left its name in the village of Aylesford that overhangs it. At this point, which is still the lowest ford across the Medway, and where an ancient trackway crossed the river,[1] the British leaders must have taken post for the defence of West Kent; but the Chronicle of the conquering people[2] tells nothing of the rush that may have carried the ford or of the fight that went struggling up through the village. We hear only that Horsa fell in the moment of victory; and the flint heap of Horsted which has long preserved his name, and was held in after-time to mark his grave, is thus the earliest of those monuments of English valour of which Westminster is the last and noblest shrine.[3]

[1] Guest, E. E. Sett. 47. For antiquities of Roman date found in this ford, see Archæol. Cantiana, i. 174.

[2] Eng. Chron. a. 455.

[3] Bæda, H. E. lib. i. c. 15, and Guest, E. E. Sett. 48.

The victory of Aylesford was followed by a political change among the assailants, whose loose organization around ealdormen was exchanged for a stricter union. Aylesford, we are told,[1] was no sooner won than "Hengest took to the kingdom, and Ælle, his son." The change no doubt gave fresh vigour to their attack; and the two kings pushed forward in 457 from the Medway to the conquest of West Kent. Fording the Darent at Dartford, they again met the British forces at the passage of the Cray, a little stream that falls through a quiet valley from the chalk-downs hard by at Orpington. Their victory must have been complete, for at its close, as the Chronicle of their conquerors tells us, the Britons "forsook Kent-land and fled with much fear to London."[2] But the ground Hengest had won seems soon to have been won back again. If we trust British tradition, the battle at Crayford was followed by a political revolution in Britain itself. The overthrow of the native leader, Vortigern, may have proved fatal to his cause; it would seem at any rate that the Romanized Britons rose in revolt under Aurelius Ambrosianus, a descendant of the last Roman general who claimed the purple as an emperor in Britain; and that the success of Aurelius drove his rival to the mountains of the west.[3] The

Repulse of the Jutes.

[1] E. Chron. a. 455.

[2] Eng. Chron. a. 457. It is possible that the "pagus" or territory of Londinium south of the Thames extended to the Cray, as this was the bound of its citizens' right of chase in the Middle Ages.

[3] Gildas, Hist. sec. 25; Guest, E. E. Sett. 50.

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revolution revived for a while the energy of the province. Fresh from his triumph over Vortigern, Aurelius marched on the invaders who were turning Kent into a desert, and his advance forced the Jutes to surrender their conquests and to fall back on their stronghold of Thanet. The fortresses of Richborough and Reculver at either mouth of the inlet which parted Thanet from the mainland still remained in British hands, and basing themselves on the former, the troops of Aurelius seem to have succeeded for some years in prisoning Hengest in his island-lair.[1]

Richborough.

Richborough had long served as the head-quarters of the legion whose business it was to guard the Saxon shore; and its site was one of great military strength.[2] The mouth of the Wantsum was narrowed, as we have seen, by the two jutting sandspits of Ebbsfleet and Sandwich; but within these the estuary widened again into a northern and a southern bay, the one beneath the slopes of Minster, the other between Sandwich and the little hamlet of Fleet. The last bay formed a shallow lagoon, whose oyster-beds were famous in the markets of Rome, and a small rise or islet in the midst of it was crowned by the massive walls of Richborough. The marble buildings within these walls had served no doubt for the residence of the Count of the Saxon Shore. Hard by them stood an amphitheatre for the games of the legionaries, and the hill slope was covered by a town which the fortress protected. Small

[1] Nennius, sec. 43, 44, 45; Guest, E. E. Sett. 53.

[2] See map of the district at this time in Archæol. Cantiana, viii. 14.

as was the area of the citadel, its walls were twelve feet thick and nearly thirty feet high, and both faces and angles were strengthened by bastions of solid masonry.[1] Against walls such as these, or those of its sister fortress at Reculver, the unskilled efforts of the Jutes could do little, and though no attempt seems to have been made to dislodge them from Thanet, the British forces remained strong enough to prison them for some years within the limits of the island.

Final conquest of the Caint.

In 465 however the petty conflicts which had gone on along the shores of the Wantsum made way for a decisive struggle. Hengest may have been strengthened by reinforcements from his home-land; while the losses of Aurelius show that he had mustered the whole strength of the island to meet the expected onset. But the overthrow of the Britons at Wipped's-fleet[2] was so terrible that all hope of preserving the bulk of Kent seems from this moment to have been abandoned: and no further struggle disturbed the Jutes in its conquest and settlement. It was only along its southern shore that the Britons now held their ground, and we can hardly doubt it was the reduction of the fortresses in this quarter which occupied the later years of Hengest.[3] Richborough and Reculver must have yielded at last to his arms; the beacon-fire which had so long guided

[1] See Roach Smith's "Antiquities of Richborough, Reculver, and Lymne," for excavations on these sites.

[2] Eng. Chron. a. 465. "There twelve Wealish Ealdormen they slew."

[3] Guest, E. E. Sett. p. 54.

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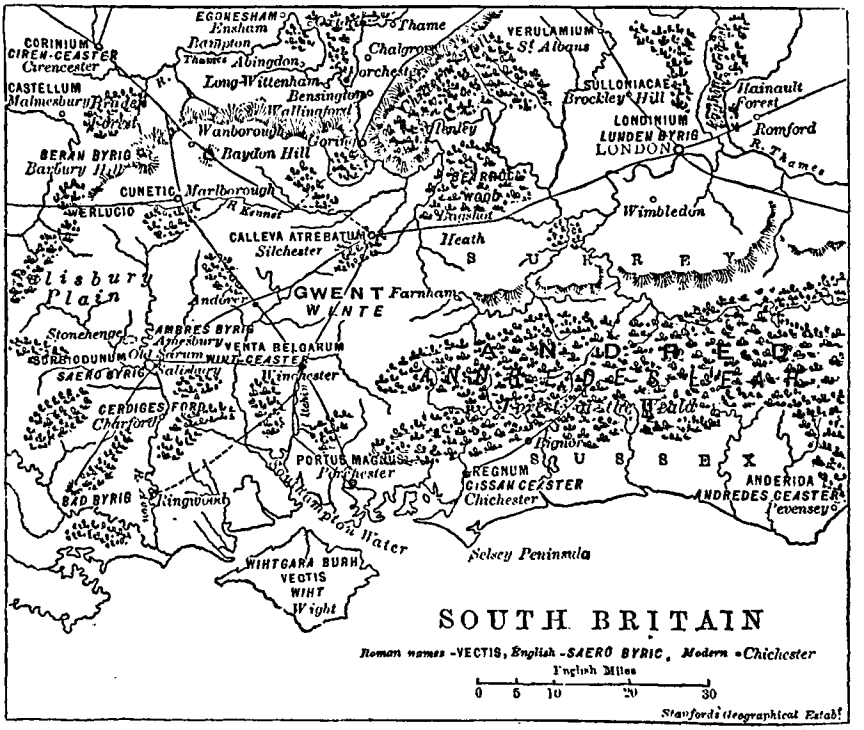
the Roman galleys along the Channel ceased to blaze on the cliffs of Dover; and a final victory of the Jutes in 473 may mark the moment when they reached the rich pastures which the Roman engineers had reclaimed from Romney Marsh. A fortress at Lymne, whose broken walls look from the slope to which they cling over the great flat at their feet, was the key to this district; and with its fall the work of the first conqueror was done. In this quarter at least the resistance of the provincials was utterly broken; in the last conflict the chronicle of the invaders boasts that the Britons "fled from the English as from fire." [1]

Landing of the South-Saxons.

With this advance to the mouth of the Weald the work of Hengest's men came to an end; nor did the Jutes from this time play any important part in the attack on the island, for their after-gains were limited to the Isle of Wight and a few districts on the Southampton Water. Fully indeed as the Caint was won, no district was less fitted to serve as a starting-point in any attack on Britain at large. While the Andredsweald, which lay in an impenetrable mass along its western border, extended southward behind the swamps of Romney Marsh to the coast of the Channel, a morass that stretched from the hills of Dulwich to the banks of the Thames blocked the narrow strip of open country between the northern edge of the Weald and the river. The more tempting waterway along the Thames itself was barred by the walls, if not by the fortified bridge, of London. The strength of these barriers

[1] Eng. Chron. a. 473.

is proved by the long pause which took place in the advance of the Jutes, for a century was to pass before they made any effort to penetrate further into the island. But their success had called a mightier foe to the work of invasion in the free-booters whose daring and whose ruthlessness were



being painted at this moment by the pen of Sidonius. It was pirates of the Saxon race, with Frisians perhaps who sailed under their name,[1] whose long pillage of the coast from the Wash to the Solent

1 Procopius, De Bell. Goth. lib. iv. 20, mentions "Frisians" among the three peoples of Britain.

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had been preserved in its name of the Saxon Shore. It was certain that the conquests of Hengest would call these rivals to their prey, and the settlement of the Jutes was soon followed by Saxon descents on either side of the Caint.[1] We know best their descent to the westward of it. Beyond Romney Marsh along the Channel the creeks and inlets which break the clay-flats to the westward of the Arun offered easy entrance for the boats of the pirates; and here tradition placed the landing in 477 of Saxon war-bands who followed Ælle and his three sons, Cymen, Wlencing, and Cissa. The first gave his name to the landing-place of the pirates in the Selsea peninsula, Cymen's ora or Keynor; while the name of the last is said to be preserved in that of Chichester, a borough that grew up at a later time on the ruins of the little town of Regnum, which must have been the earliest object of this attack. Their raid was a successful one; and after severe losses the Britons of this district fled to the Andredsweald.[2] But the weakness of the invading force is shown by the slowness with which the Chronicle of the conquerors pictures Ælle as fighting his way in battle after battle across the streams which cleave this strip of coast on their way to the Channel.[3] It was only after fourteen years of struggle that the

[1] Bæda, H. E. i. c. 15.

[2] E. Chron. a. 477. Guest, E. E. Sett. p. 54. The brief entries of the Chronicle are largely expanded by Henry of Huntingdon, who may have used poems or annals still extant in his time, and whose story here at least falls in with the geographical features of the locality.

[3] E. Chron. a. 485, for the fight at Mearcredsburn.

Saxons reached the point where the South Downs abut on the sea at Beachy Head, and dipped down in the district that formed the mouth of the Weald, a district guarded by the fortress of Anderida, whose massive walls still cover a rise above the general level of the coast at a spot which under its later name of Pevensey was to witness the landing of a greater conqueror in William the Norman.

Anderida.

The siege of Anderida proved a long and a difficult one. Eastward of the fortress the ground lifts slowly towards our Hastings, where a sandstone ridge abuts upon the sea. This Forest-ridge, as it is called, is in fact the termination of a low rise which forms a water-parting through the whole length of the Weald, and which throws down the streams of the Weald to north and south by channels that they have hewn in the chalk downs on either side of it. Then, as now, the ground was covered with woodland and copses, but under the Roman rule the life of this district presented a striking contrast to the solitude and silence of the rest of the Andredsweald.[1] Hid in its wooded gorges we find traces of a busy population of miners, the small round pits from which the nodules of their ore were dug, rude smelting-furnaces on the hill-slope, big cinder-heaps, covered nowadays with oak and elm. It must have been the attacks of these miners that made the task of the besiegers so hard a one. If we may trust the tradition of a later time,[2] the Britons swarmed like bees round the

[1] See Wright's description of Pevensey in his "Wanderings of an Antiquary."

[2] Huntingdon, Historia Anglorum (ed. T. Arnold), p. 45.

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English lines, assailing them by night, and withdrawing at dawn to the gorges of the Forest-ridge where they lay in ambush for the parties that attacked them. An attempt to storm the town would at once draw the miners on the rear of its assailants; and when the besiegers, galled by the storm of arrows and javelins, turned from their task to encounter these foes, the Britons drew back to their fastnesses in the Weald. It was not till Ælle was strong enough to detach a part of his force to cover the siege that the resistance of the town came to an end. The terrible words of the Chronicle tell the story of its fall: the English "slew all that were therein, nor was there henceforth one Briton left."[1] The work of slaughter, we can hardly doubt, was soon completed by the attack and conquest of the brave iron-workers who had failed to avert the doom of Anderida; and from that time to the days of the Edwards no sound of quarryman or forge was heard in the gorges of the Forest-ridge.

Bignor.

Of the victories or settlement of the Saxons along the coast from Chichester to Pevensey we know little or nothing. Nowhere indeed was the land richer in plunder; for the coast had been occupied by the Romans from the date of their first settlement in Britain, and the country side was dotted with the homes of the wealthier provincials. A country-house such as that whose remains have been discovered at Bignor, a few miles from Chichester,

[1] E. Chron. a. 491. Huntingdon adds, "Ita urbem distruxerunt quod nunquam postea re-edificata est: locus tantum quasi nobilissimæ urbis transeuntibus ostenditur desolatus" (*i.e.* in the twelfth century).—Hist. Angl. (ed. Arnold), p. 45.

lights up for us the social life which was swept away by the Saxon sword.[1] The household buildings of this mansion formed a court more than a hundred feet square, round the inner side of which ran a covered colonnade, with a tesselated pavement arranged in fanciful patterns. Within the house itself the hall with its central fountain preserved the southern type of domestic building that the Roman builders brought from their sunnier land, as the furnace which heated the floor of the banqueting-room behind showed the ingenuity with which they accommodated themselves to the needs of a sterner climate. The walls of the larger rooms glowed with frescoes, fragments of which retain much of their original vividness of colour, while their floors were of elaborate and costly mosaic work. Figures of dancing nymphs filled the compartments of one chamber, a picture of the rape of Ganymedes formed the centre of another, a third was gay with pictures of the Seasons or of gladiatorial games, where cupids sported as retiarii and secutores of the amphitheatre. But no traces remain of the line of low huts which here as elsewhere, no doubt, leant against the outer wall that girt in the circuit of buildings, huts which housed the serfs who tilled the lands of their owner, and whose squalor, in its dark contrast with the comfort and splendour of the mansion itself, would have painted better for us than a thousand passages from law or chronicle the union of material wealth with social degradation that lay like a dark shadow over the Roman world.

[1] Wright, "Celt, Roman, and Saxon," p. 243. There is a fuller description in his "Wanderings of an Antiquary."

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Dimly as we trace this winning of the south-eastern coast by the men who were afterwards known as the Sussex or South Saxons, we pass as from light into darkness when we turn to the work of another Saxon tribe who must at about the same time have been conquering and settling on the other side of the Caint, to the north of the estuary of the Thames.[1] In the utter lack of any written record of the struggle in this quarter, we can only collect stray glimpses of its story from the geographical features of this district and from its local names. From both these sets of facts we are drawn to the conclusion that it was not from the Thames that this district was mainly attacked. In that quarter there was little to tempt an invader. The clay flats which stretch along the coast of Southern Essex were then but a fringe of fever-smitten and desolate fens, while the meadows that rise from them to the west were part of a forest-tract that extended to the marshes of the Lea. The whole region indeed beyond the coast was thick with woodland; in the Middle Ages all Essex lay within the bounds of the royal forest: and its timber church-towers and log-framed homesteads still recall its wealth of wood. To the northward, however, the country became

Landing of the East-Saxons.

[1] Huntingdon (Hist. Angl., ed. Arnold, p. 49) names as the first East-Saxon king, Erceñwine (or as Florence calls him, Æscwine), whose son and successor, Sleda, married the sister of Æthelberht of Kent. As the usage elsewhere was for the conquerors to gather into a kingdom some time after their first conquest, this would bring the landing in Essex to about the time of the landing in Sussex, which is of itself probable enough. Malmesbury makes Sleda their first king (Gest. Reg., ed. Hardy, lib. i. sec. 98).

somewhat clearer; and here a tempting inlet offered itself in the estuary where the waters of the Chelm and the Stour found a common passage to the sea, and where Camulodunum offered a city to sack.[1] The town stood, like its successor, Colchester, on a steep rise or "dun" round whose northern and eastern sides bent the river Colne. Camulodunum was the oldest of the Roman settlements in Britain: temples and public buildings had already risen indeed within its bounds when the revolt under Boadicea broke the course of Roman conquest. Its size and massive walls[2] prove it to have become in later days one of the busiest and wealthiest towns of the province; and from the after settlement of its foes we may probably gather that the district beneath its sway spread northward as far as the Stour.

Their boundaries.

It was in the valleys of the Colne and Stour that the East Saxons, as these warriors came to be called, seem mainly to have settled after the fall of Camulodunum. But here, as in their other conquest in the south, the settlement of the Saxons was small and unimportant. Neither tract indeed was large or fruitful enough to draw to it any great mass of the conquerors, while from neither was it easy to push across their bounds into more fertile districts. As the South Saxons were prisoned within their

[1] For Camulodunum, see map in Markham's "Life of Fairfax," p. 309, etc., and Freeman, Archæol. Journal, xxxiv. 47.

[2] The circuit is more perfect than anywhere else in Britain; but the walls themselves have been reconstructed in later days. Freeman, Archæol. Jour. xxxiv. 55. The museum of the town is rich in Roman relics.

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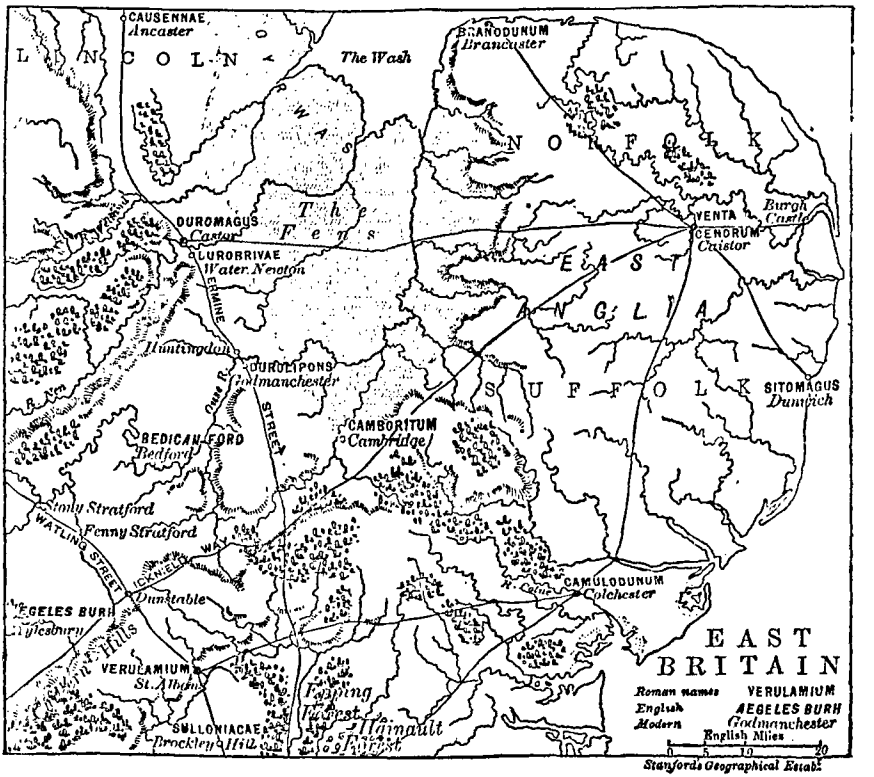
narrow strip of coast by the reaches of the Andredsweald, so the East Saxons found themselves as effectually barred from any advance into the island by a chain of dense woodlands, the Waltham Chace of later ages, whose scanty relics have left hardly more than the names of Epping and Hainault Forests.



These woodlands, which stretched at this time in a dense belt on either side the Roding along the western border of the district that the invaders had won from the Thames to the open downs above Saffron Walden, and were backed to the west by the marshy valley of the Lea, whose waters widened

into an estuary as it reached the Thames, seem to have been wholly uninhabited, for no trace remains in their area of military stations or of the country houses or burial-places of the provincials. How impassable in fact these fastnesses had been found by the Romans is clear from the fact that even their road-makers never attempted to penetrate them. The lower portion of the Ermine Street, the road to the north, which in later days struck direct through this district from London to Huntingdon, did not exist in Roman times, and the British provincial was forced to make a circuit either by Leicester or Colchester on his way to Lincoln and York.[1]

Landing of the Engle.

This double barrier to the west proved formidable enough to hold the invaders at bay for almost a hundred years. But to the northward no such barrier hindered the East Saxons from sharing in a fight that must have been going on at this time in the chalk uplands which rose to the north of them across the Stour. It is in this district that we first meet with a third race of conquerors, whose work was to be of even greater moment in our history than that of Saxon or Jute. The men who were to spread along the Yare and the Orwell, and to march in triumph through the massive gate which recalls the strength of Roman Lincoln, whose work it was to colonise Mid-Britain and the line of the Trent, as well as to win for their own the vast regions between the Firth of Forth and the Humber, were drawn from a tribe whose name was destined to absorb that of Saxon and Jute, and

[1] Guest, "Four Roman Ways," Archæol. Journ. vol. xiv. 116.

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to stamp itself on the people which sprang from the union of the conquerors of Britain, as on the land which they won.[1] These were the Engle or Englishmen. The bulk of the tribes who then bore this name, if in the darkness of their early history they have been rightly traced by modern research, lay probably along the middle Elbe in the country about Magdeburg; while fragments of the same race were found on the Weser, in what is now known as Lower Hanover and Oldenburg, and in the peninsula which juts from the shores of North Germany to part the Baltic and the Northern Seas.[2]

The East Engle.

It is in the heart of this peninsula that we still find the district which preserves their name of Angeln or the Engleland; and from the desert state of this district as men saw it hundreds of years afterwards,[3] it would seem that, unlike their Saxon neighbours, the bulk of whom remained in their own homesteads, the whole Engle people forsook their earlier seats for the soil of Britain. Such a transfer would account for the wide area of their conquests. Of their invasion or settlement no chronicle has come down to us,[4]

[1] Bæda, H. E. i. 15.

[2] Stubbs, Const. Hist. i. 45.

[3] Bæda, H. E. i. c. 15.

[4] Of the conquest of East Anglia, Lincolnshire, the Fen-land, Mid-Britain, and Yorkshire, we have no record, either on the part of conquered or conquerors. In Northumbria the Chronicle tells only the fact of Ida's elevation to the kingship and seizure of Bamborough; while Nennius preserves a faint tradition of some of the earlier conflicts. We are forced, therefore, to fall back on the indications given us by archæology and by the physical character of the ground itself in attempting a rough sketch of the English advance.

but their first descents seem to have been aimed against the upland into which the northernmost chalk-rises that diverge from the Berkshire downs widen as they reach the sea. This tract, which comprises our present shires of Norfolk and Suffolk, had drawn settlers to it from the earliest times of British history. It had been the seat of the Iceni, the most powerful of the tribes among whom the island had been parted before the Roman rule, and whose name, like that of the "Gwent" in which they lived, was preserved in a Venta Icenorum that was the predecessor of our Norwich. The downs which form its western portion were for the most part stretches of heath and pasture, over which wandered huge flocks of bustards; but in the river-courses that break through the levels of clay and gravel between these downs and the sea, population and wealth had grown steadily through the ages of Roman rule; and the importance of the country was shown by the care with which the provincial administration had guarded its coast.

Their conquests.

The district formed in fact the last unconquered remnant of the Saxon Shore. But only their ruins tell us of the fall of its strongholds, of Brancaster on the shore of the Wash, or of Garianonum at the mouth of the Yare; while not even its ruins remain to tell of the fall of Venta Icenorum, or of the conquest of the district that lay around it. All we learn from the scanty record of later days is that the assailants of this region came direct from the German shores; that their attacks were "many and oft"; and that countless strifes between these little parties and the ealdormen

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who headed them broke their war against the British.[1] From the size of the later hundreds we may perhaps gather that the conquerors settled thickly over the soil,[2] while their local names lead us to believe that offshoots from the Saxon houses who were conquering on the Colne joined the Engle in their attack on the Gwent.[3] The very designations of Norfolk and Suffolk tell how one folk of the conquerors fought its way inland from the estuary at Yarmouth up the valleys of the Ouse, the Wensum, the Yare, and the Waveney, to the northern half of the upland, while another and a lesser folk struck up from the common mouth of the Orwell and the Stour to the southern downs.[4] Norwich, no doubt, formed the central settlement of

[1] Huntingdon, Hist. Angl. (ed. Arnold), p. 48. "Eâ tempestate venerunt multi et sæpe de Germaniâ, et occupaverunt East-Angle et Merce; sed necdum sub uno rege redacta erant. Plures autem proceres certatim regiones occupabant, unde innumerabilia bella fiebant: proceres vero, quia multi erant, nomine carent."

[2] One Norfolk hundred, that of Humbleyard, contains less than 23,000 acres, or less than many single townships in Yorkshire or Lancashire.

[3] See lists in Kemble, "Saxons in England," i. 456, etc.

[4] Flor. Worc. ed. Thorpe (i. 260), in one of the appendices to his work, fixes approximately the date of this conquest: "Regno posterius Cant-wariorum, et prius regno Occidentalium Saxonum, exortum est regnum Orientalium Anglorum," *i. e.* its "kingdom" was set up between 455 and 519. Bæda, speaking of Rædwald, who was king of the East Angles at the close of the sixth century, calls him "filius Tytili, cujus pater fuit Vuffa, a quo reges Orientalium Anglorum Vuffingas appellant." (H. E. ii. 15.) If Uffa was the first king, the beginning of the kingdom cannot be thrown much further back than the latter date of 519; and as we must allow for a period of isolated conquests and anarchy before this date the first descents of the East Engle cannot be far from the time at which we have placed them.

the one folk, as Sudbury may have formed that of the other; and though there are enough common names among each to show what their after history implies —that there was no deep severance between them— the far greater number of local designations which are peculiar to either district[1] points to a real individuality in the "folks" who conquered them. From the downs the conquerors again pushed inland to the flats at their feet, and the vale of the little Ouse was included in their territory. But they cannot have been vigorous assailants of the towns about the Wash, if the rampart which runs across Newmarket Heath from Rech to Cowledge was, as is possible, their work.[2] The Devil's Dyke, as this barrier is called, is clearly a work of defence against enemies advancing from the Fens, and as a defence to the East Anglians it was of priceless value, for stretching as it did from a point where the country became fenny and impassable to a point where the woods equally forbad all access, it covered the only entrance into the country they had won. But if the dyke be a work of the conquerors of this part of the coast, its purely defensive character shows that their attack was at an end; and that it was rather as assailants than as a prey that they regarded the towns of central Britain.

Saxon Shore conquered.

But even if the invaders were forced to halt at this

1 See the lists in Kemble, "Saxons in England," vol. i. p. 456.

2 Its ditch faces towards Cambridgeshire and the Fens (Camden's "Britannia," 1753, vol. i. 487). It was the boundary of the kingdom as well as of the diocese of East Anglia. The name is probably a Christian version of Woden's dyke or Wansdyke.

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stage of their advance, they were now firmly planted on British soil. With the settlement of East Anglia the conquest of the Saxon Shore was complete, and the whole coast of Britain from the Wash to Southampton Water was in the hands of the invader. Its fortresses were broken down. Its towns were burned and desolate. A new people was planted on its soil. Even if we look on the dates given by English tradition as at best approximations to the truth, they can hardly be wrong when they point out this district as having been the first to be won, and as having taken long years in the winning. It is indeed the slow progress of the invaders, and the bitterness which would naturally spring from so protracted a struggle, that best accounts for the differences which even a casual examination of the map discloses between the settlement of the conquerors here and their settlement in central or northern Britain; for nowhere is the English settlement so thick, nowhere do we find the tribal houses so crowded on the soil, or the hundreds, in which the settlers grouped themselves, so small and so thickly clustered.[1]

[1] Kemble, in his "Saxons in England," pointed out that the hundreds along the coast—which he regarded as representing the settlements of the free settlers—were smaller and thicker than those of the interior: and as regards the Saxon Shore, this is true enough. Elsewhere it does not apply in the same degree; and Professor Stubbs urges that "Gloucester and Wiltshire are as minutely subdivided as Devonshire and Dorsetshire" (Const. Hist. i. 113, note). But this hardly tells against the identification of the smaller hundreds with the earlier settlements, as Devon and Dorset are, like Gloucestershire, among later conquests, or against the truth of Kemble's statement if it be restricted to the Saxon Shore.

CHAPTER II.

CONQUESTS OF THE ENGLE.

c. 500—*c.* 570.

Barriers of Britain.

To the province the loss of the Saxon Shore must have been a terrible loss; for with its conquest Britain was cut off from the Continent, she was isolated from the rest of the civilized world, and a fresh impulse must have been given to the anarchy that had begun in the strife of her Romanized and Celtic populations. But greatly as it might weaken Britain, the loss of this tract was far from throwing her open to the invaders. We have seen what barriers held back the Jute of Kent and the Saxon on either side of him; but barriers as impassable held back the Engle of the eastern Gwent, for the forest-line which began on the Thames reached on along their western frontier to the Wash, and the Wash stretched to the northward from Newmarket to the sea. The fens which occupied this huge break in the eastern coast of Britain covered in the sixth century a far larger space than now;[1] for while they

[1] Pearson's Historical Maps of England, p. 3, and map of "Britannia Romana."

CHAP. II. Conquests of the Engle. c. 500-c. 570.

stretched northward up the Witham almost as far as Lincoln, and southwards up the Cam as far as Cambridge, they reached inland to Huntingdon and Stamford, and the road between those places skirted their bounds to the west. So vast a reach of tangled marsh offered few temptations to an invader; and we shall see grounds at a later time for believing that the Gyrwas, as the Engle freebooters who found a home in its islands called themselves, were for a long time too weak to break through the line of towns that guarded its inner border.

Conquest of Lindsey.

Had the invaders pushed inland only from this quarter, therefore, the resistance of the Britons might have succeeded in prisoning them within the bounds of the Saxon Shore, as that of Gaul at a later day prisoned the Northmen within the bounds of Normandy. But the sixth century can hardly have been long begun when each of the two peoples who had done the main work of conquest opened a fresh attack on the flanks of the tract they had won. On its western flank, as we shall see, the Saxons appeared in the Southampton Water. On its northern flank the Engle appeared in the estuaries of the Forth and of the Humber. To the south of this last great opening in the coast the oolitic range that stretches across Mid-Britain from the Cotswolds through Northamptonshire abuts on the waters of the river-mouth; while to the east of the oolites, across the muddy stream of the Ancholme, rises a parallel line of chalk heights, cut off from the chalk-upland of East Anglia by the Wash. As it extends to the south the oolitic range is broken by a deep depression through which

the Witham makes its way to the Wash; and to the south of the Witham, over the country which is now known as Kesteven,[1] a mass of dense woodland stretched from the fen-country about Boston across the heights into the basin of the Trent. The two uplands, however, which lay to the north of this wold tract formed even then a populous and fertile part of Britain. Roman industry had begun the work of draining its marshes; its long reaches of heath were already broken with farms and homesteads; and the houses which lay dotted over the country side show by the character of their ruins that its landowners were men of wealth and culture. The Ermine Street from the south struck like an arrow from Stamford through the woods of Kesteven along the crest of the heights, to drop suddenly into the valley of the Witham as it breaks through them; and uniting with the Fosse Road from the Trent valley as it crossed the river, again climbed the steep slope on the other side of the gap, over which streams nowadays in picturesque confusion the modern city of Lincoln. At the edge of the tableland to which this ascent leads, on a site marked by the minster and castle that now tower over the city, stood the square fortress of the first Roman Lindum; and through this earlier town the road struck by the Portway Gate, which is still left to us, straight onward to the upland without its walls. Here, as elsewhere however, the growth of the place had brought about an extension of its defences; a fortified suburb spread

[1] Camden, "Britannia" (ed. 1753), vol. i. p. 554. See Camden's Map of Lincolnshire.

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down the hill in the line of the modern Lincoln to the stream which even then furnished an important inlet for the coasting trade of central Britain; and since the close of the Roman rule the citizens seemed to have striven to strengthen their walls by raising a line of earthworks to the north of the town.[1] But growth and commerce were alike brought to an end by the storm which fell on them; and town and suburb must have been left a heap of ruins while their conquerors spread over the deserted country north of the Witham, and settled down in croft and homestead as the Lindiswara, the "dwellers about Lindum."[2]

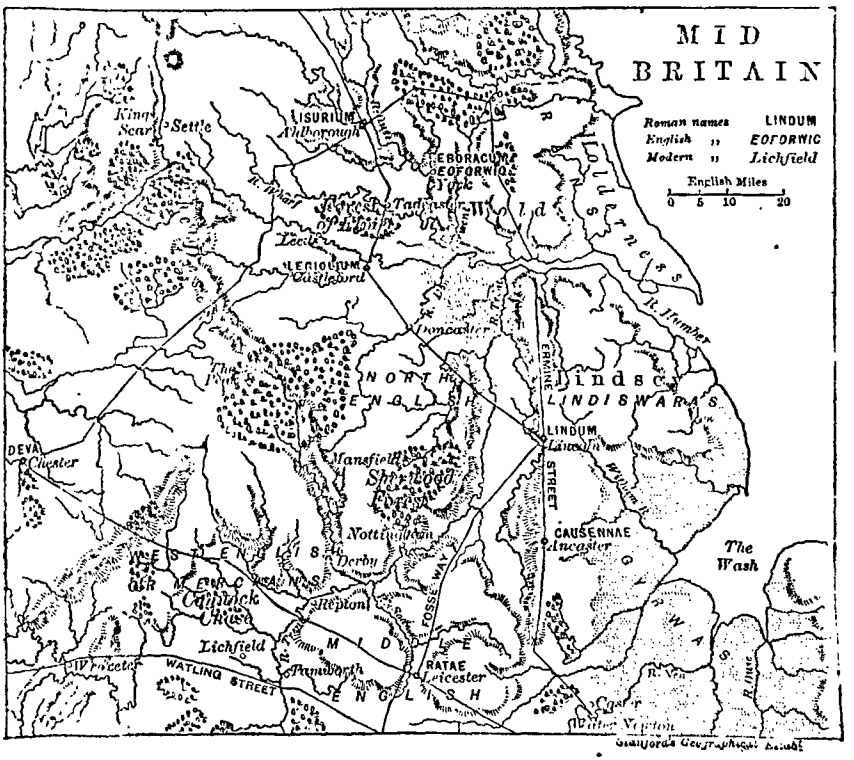
The Yorkshire Wolds.

The conquest of Lindsey however brought the Engle little save plunder. The estuary of the Humber, with a huge swamp that spread along the bed of the lower Trent, and of which a portion remains in the Isle of Axholme, girt these uplands in on the north and north-west; while over the whole of the modern shire south of the Witham, from Lincoln to Stamford, stretched the thick woods of Kesteven, and the Holland of the Fens. It was only along the Foss-road from Lincoln to Newark that the country was open for an advance; and along this the Lindiswara may have crept slowly to the Trent. But it was the effort of another tribe of conquerors that brought the Engle fairly into the heart of Britain. While the assailants of Lindsey had been striking from the

[1] See G. T. Clark, "Lincoln Castle," Archæol. Journal, xxxiii. 213. Freeman, "Norman Conquest," iv. 212.

[2] We have no means of dating the settlement of the Lindiswara; but we can hardly be wrong in placing it between that of the East Engle and the Deirans.

Humber over the heights and wolds on the south of its estuary, other Engle adventurers must have been seizing the flat promontory or naze at the mouth of the Humber, to which they gave the name of Holderness. Fertile as drainage has now made this district, it can then have been little more than a narrow line



of mud flats, which offered small temptation for settlement. But across the stream of the Hull, in whose marshy and desolate channels men hunted the beaver which gave its name to our Beverley, the ground rises gently to a crescent of chalk-downs, the wolds that run from the Humber by Market-Weighton to

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the cliffs of Flamborough Head. Though dykes and gravel-mounds scar their surface, the want of water would have always prevented any settlement on these wolds; they must have been at this time mere sheep-walks, as they remained till half-a-century ago, and could be easily overrun by the invader. The wolds, however, were hardly mastered when their conquerors looked on a richer and more tempting country. To north and to west the chalk-heights plunge abruptly down steep slopes of scanty turf to a plain at their feet, through which the stream of the Derwent bends from its rise beside the sea on the east to pour its waters into the Humber. The springs that break from the base of the cliffs make the lower Derwent vale a rich and fertile country; and here, as the local names show, the houses of the conquerors, the Deirans as they came to call themselves, were thickly planted. The district about Weighton seems to have been chosen as the sacred ground of their settlement; and a temple of their gods is said by local tradition to have stood in the village of Goodmanham.[1] On the north the narrower space of the upper vale forced them to hug the heights more closely; though the fall of Derventio, which lay probably on the site of Malton, would open to them the country round it, where their kings in later days found a favourite home.[2] Holderness, the Wolds, and the valley of the Derwent now form the East Riding of Yorkshire; and it is likely enough that

[1] The site of the temple was shown in Bæda's day (H. E. ii. 13).

[2] Bæda, H. E. ii. 9.

this local division preserves, however roughly, the boundaries of the earlier kingdom of the Deirans.

But they were soon drawn onward. Beyond the green meadows at the feet of the Wolds stretched away to the westward and the northward one of the richest and most fertile regions in Britain. Country houses of rich landowners studded thickly the tract of red marls that spreads along the Wharfe and the Ouse; and in the midst of this level stood the city of York or Eboracum,[1] once the capital of Britain. The town lay on a tongue of land between the broad channel of the Ouse and the bed of a lesser stream, the Foss, which came through a marshy and difficult country from the woodlands beneath the Wolds. To the military importance and strength of its position were doubtless due the existence of the camp whose limits are still marked by the small square of massive walls that enclosed in Trajan's day the earlier Roman city.[2] But the town soon overleapt these bounds.

Eboracum.

[1] Phillips (Archæol. Journal, vol. x. 183) infers. from a study of roads, etc., that "Eboracum was not situated on the earliest track of the middle road to the north. That track in fact went from near Tadcaster to Aldborough, leaving York ten miles to the right. But at the epoch of the Antonine Itinerary the direct route was abandoned, and the deviation through Eboracum substituted." Freeman, "Norman Conquest," iv. 202, and Raine, "Historians of the Church of York," i. præf. (Rolls series), throw light on the early topography of York, whose Roman antiquities may be studied in the "Eboracum" of Drake and the "Eburacum" of Wellbeloved.

[2] A broken tablet in the York Museum, which tells of work done by the ninth legion in Trajan's day, is the earliest monument of Eboracum. Another, of a Decurio, shows the form taken by its municipal administration.

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Placed as it was at the head of the tidal waters of the Ouse, and forming the natural centre of northern Britain, it became under Severus the seat of the provincial government and the headquarters of the force which guarded Britain against the Picts. Before the close of the Roman rule it covered the whole area of the modern city on either side of the Ouse, while beyond it lay suburbs a mile in length and roads lined with tombs.[1] As the dwelling-place of the Cæsar Constantius, York became for a while one of the Imperial cities of the Empire. It was yet more illustrious as the birthplace of Constantine, and as the spot from which he started on that wonderful career which changed the face of the world. The work of Constantine left its traces on Eboracum, as

[1] The wealthier class of burghers and officials are found buried along the road to Calcaria or Tadcaster. It is from these tombs that the relics of Roman life preserved at York have mostly been drawn, fragments of the fine Samian ware brought for rich citizens' use from the Continent, curious egg-shell pottery, vases and cups from a woman's toilet-case, sepulchral figures of soldiers and citizens, and the like. On the right bank of the Ouse, at a short distance to the right of the road to Calcaria, was discovered, in 1873 (Murray's "Yorkshire," p. 70), a "cemetery for a poorer class than that which raised its monuments nearer to the great road, and for some distance along its course. In some parts of the ground Roman carters had been in the habit of shooting rubbish from the neighbouring city. There were thick strata of Roman bricks, mortar, and pottery, mingled with fragments of wall plaster, on which coloured patterns were distinct. Adjoining this rougher portion of the cemetery two or three deep pits or putei were found, into which, as was usual, the bodies of slaves had been thrown carelessly and pell-mell, as was evident from the confused mass of bones in all possible positions."

on the rest of the Empire; its bishop took his place beside the Imperial Vicar; and the shrines of Serapis and Mithras, which were frequent in the older city, were superseded by a Christian basilica. With the departure of the Roman administration, however, and with the inroads of the Pict, the glory of the city passed away; but it remained a strong and wealthy place, the head, it may be, of a confederacy of the neighbouring cities to which its high-roads led; and the marks of its greatness survived in the lofty walls[1] and towers which awed Alcuin two centuries later, as well as in the "proofs of Roman refinement" that were still visible in the days of William of Malmesbury.[2]

Conquest of Yorkshire

In the century that had passed since the close of the Roman rule York had probably felt the need of additional defence; and modern inquiry has detected the work of its citizens in the mound of earth which encloses the modern city and which serves as a base for its later wall.[3] But the effort proved a fruitless one, and after a struggle whose incidents are lost for us, the town like its neighbour cities lay a desolate

[1] One noble fragment of its wall survives in a bastion, cased with neat masonry of small ashlar blocks, which are broken by a line of red brick. The tower is embowered nowadays in greenery and gay with flowers. From its base the ground falls in steep slopes to the river, lying deep in what is still a green ravine. This tower stood at the south-west angle of the Roman city.

[2] Raine, Hist. of Church of York, i. præf. xiii. who adds, "In no other Roman city in Britain have remains of equal number and importance been discovered." (xv.)

[3] G. T. Clark, "The Defences of York," Archæol. Journal, vol. xxxi. 232.

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ruin, while its conquerors spread slaying and burning along the valley of the Ouse.[1] Along its southern course, indeed, there was little worth the winning. The moorlands that lie close to York on the west run onwards to the Peak of Derbyshire in a wild region of tumbled hills, traversed but by a few pack-roads,[2] a region which formed a British kingdom that for a hundred years to come defied the arms of the invaders;[3] and though these moorlands of Elmet sheer away from the Ouse as it passes to the Humber, the broadening level which stretched along its lower course, as along the lower channels of the Wharfe, the Aire, and the Don that come down to it from the moors, was then a wild waste of oak-forest and fen.[4] Through this tract, in the narrow strip of open tillage between the marshes and the edge of Elmet, ran the one road which led from Central Britain to the plain of York, crossing the Don at Doncaster and its two fellow-rivers at Castleford and at Tadcaster, where it bent sharply aside to Eboracum. The fall of these cities must have accompanied the conquest of this district, but the towns seem to have been small, and save at Calcaria the country would furnish small room for settlement.

[1] "Every Roman station and house in the north shows traces of having been destroyed by fire."—Raine, Hist. of Ch. of York, i. præf. xvii.

[2] Phillips traces and examines these. Archæol. Journ. vol. x. p. 181.

[3] This district answers roughly to the present West Riding.

[4] This was the district of Hatfield Chase, a northern outlier of the great fen through which the Trent made its way to the Humber.

North of York, as the road crossed the Don and struck up the Swale by Catterick[1] to the Tees, a fairer and wider tract opened before the invaders, and the peasants of Aldborough show on the flooring of their cottages mosaic pavements that bear witness to the luxury and refinement which passed away in the wreck of Isurium.[2] It was along this central plain, however, that the Deirans could alone find booty. The cliff-like face of the Hambleton Hills, towering over a forest[3] that extended along the Ouse on its eastern

[1] Cataractonium seems from its remains to have been little more than a small walled station, from which the northern road struck across the desolate moors to the wall, while a side-track ran north-westward to Lavatræ, or Bowes, in Cumberland.

[2] Isurium can have been little inferior to York in size or wealth. As the forest of Galtres blocked all passage eastward of the Ouse, it was by the western bank of the river that the main road struck to the north across the lower channel of the Nidd and the passage over the Ure at Isurium. As commanding this passage, Isurium was a military point of some importance, but it was also important as the point of junction of this great northern main-road with a road which came from the Vale of Malton and Derwent to the east, skirting the northern edge of Galtres forest, along the slopes of the Hambleton Hills, as with a second which came directly from Tadcaster and the south, and a third which came from Ilkley and the western moors. The rude masses of gritstone, some twenty feet high, which stand in the fields hard by, and are here known as the "Devil's Arrows," suggest an equal importance in yet earlier ages, as do possibly the large round mounds that stand outside the city walls, and one of which still remains. From the existing traces of foundations, the city must have been a closely-packed mass of narrow lanes. "Traces of fire," we are told, "are still visible on parts of the walls."

[3] The later forest of Galtres formed a relic of this woodland. Even in the Middle Ages Galtres extended from the walls of York as far northward as Easingwold and Craik, and as far

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bank just above York, guarded moorlands which stretched from the Vale of Derwent to that of the Tees; and it was only along the little stream-courses which ran down to the Vale of Pickering, or in the openings which break the line of its coast, that the Engle can have settled in the lonely wilds which they named "Cliff-land" or Cleveland. Nor can their settlements have been thicker in the moorlands that fronted them on the north-west. The border line of Yorkshire still marks the furthest bounds to which they drove the Britons as they won their way up Wharfedale, or traversed the wide dip of Ribblesdale, or pushed across broad pastures and through primæval woods that sheltered the wolf and the wild white oxen over the gap of Stainmore along the road from Catterick to Carlisle.[1]

The conquered Britons.

If history tells us nothing of the victories that laid this great district at the feet of its conquerors, the spade of the archæologist has done somewhat to

eastward as Castle-Howard. In Leland's day the part of the forest between Castle-Hutton and York was, near York itself, "moorish and low ground, and having little wood, in the other part higher and reasonably wooded." It then abounded in wild deer. So lonely was the waste north of York that travellers often lost their way when making for the city.

[1] The story of a flight of an "Archbishop Sampson" from York on its fall about A.D. 500 to Brittany is simply an invention of the twelfth century, and part of the struggle of the church of Dol against the claims of the see of Tours. (Stubbs and Haddan, "Councils of Great Britain," i. 149, note.) But the date of the fall of York may be fairly accurate. The first King of the Deirans was Ælla, the son of Yffi, whose reign began in 559; (Flor. Worc. ed. Thorpe. i. 268); and we may therefore probably date their invasion as going on during the forty or fifty years before that time.

reveal the ruin and misery of the conquered people. The caves of the Yorkshire moorlands preserve traces of the miserable fugitives who fled to them for shelter. Such a cave opens on the side of a lonely ravine, known now as the King's Scaur, high up in the moors beside Settle.[1] In primæval ages it had been a haunt of hyænas who dragged thither the mammoths, the reindeer, the bisons, and the bears that prowled in the neighbouring glens. At a later time it became a home of savages, whose stone adzes and flint knives and bone harpoons are still embedded in its floor. But these too vanished in their turn, and this haunt of primitive man lay lonely and undisturbed till the sword of the English invaders drove the Roman provincials for shelter to the moors. The hurry of their flight may be gathered from the relics their cave-life has left behind it. There was clearly little time to do more than to drive off the cattle, the swine, the goats, whose bones lie scattered round the hearth fire at the mouth of the cave, where they served the wretched fugitives for food. The women must have buckled hastily their brooches of bronze or parti-coloured enamel, the peculiar workmanship of Celtic Britain, and snatched up a few household implements as they hurried away. The men, no doubt, girded on as hastily the swords, whose dainty sword-hilts of ivory and bronze still remain to tell the tale of their doom, and hiding in their breast what money the house contained, from coins of Trajan to the wretched "minims" that told

[1] Boyd Dawkins, "Cave Hunting," pp. 81-125, has given a full account of the series of remains found in this cave.

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of the Empire's decay, mounted their horses to protect their flight. At nightfall all were crouching beneath the dripping roof of the cave or round the fire that was blazing at its mouth, and a long suffering began in which the fugitives lost year by year the memory of the civilization from which they came. A few charred bones show how hunger drove them to slay their horses for food; reddened pebbles mark the hour when the new vessels they wrought were too weak to stand the fire, and their meal was cooked by dropping heated stones into the pot. A time seems to have come when their very spindles were exhausted, and the women who wove in that dark retreat made spindle whorls as they could from the bones that lay about them.

Northern Britain.

While the Engle were thus mastering the future Yorkshire from the estuary of the Humber, they were making an even more important settlement in the estuary of the Forth. No district of Britain had been the scene of so long a conflict as the country between the Firth of Forth and the Tyne. Throughout the period of the Roman rule this border had been a battle-ground. The Roman conquest of Southern Britain indeed was hardly completed when the pressure of the unconquered tribes to the north forced Hadrian to guard the province by a barrier drawn right across this tract of country.[1] A massive wall, backed to the south by an earthen rampart and a ditch, and strengthened by military stations and watch-towers along its course, stretched for seventy

[1] Dr. Collingwood Bruce has summed up all we know of this barrier in his volume on "The Roman Wall."

miles across the wild moorlands between the thin strips of cultivated ground which then lined the mouth of the Solway or the Tyne. Nothing gives a livelier picture of Roman Britain on its military side than the remains of this wall and the monuments we find among its ruins. With the departure however of the legion that garrisoned this barrier its whole line must have been left desolate. The towns in its course were merely military stations, which could contribute nothing to its defence when the garrison was withdrawn, and which would be left as deserted as the wall itself. The ground which it traversed indeed was for the most part a waste that could furnish few supplies for its inhabitants; and the troops and camp-followers who held the barrier must have been provided with food and supplies from the headquarters at Eboracum. Even had a national force been ready to take the place of the legions, the maintenance of such a garrison involved an organization and expense which can hardly have been possible for the broken province; and the great barrier probably sank at once into solitude and ruin, while the Picts poured unmolested into the country which it guarded. Marks of their havoc may perhaps still be traced in the station that occupied the site of Maryport to the south of Carlisle, amidst whose ruins we find a tower-gate broken down by violence, and the houses of its main street charred with fire.[1] Further south, at Ribchester on the Ribble, amongst the burned wreck of the town, have been found skeletons of men

[1] Wright, Celt, Roman, and Saxon, 452.

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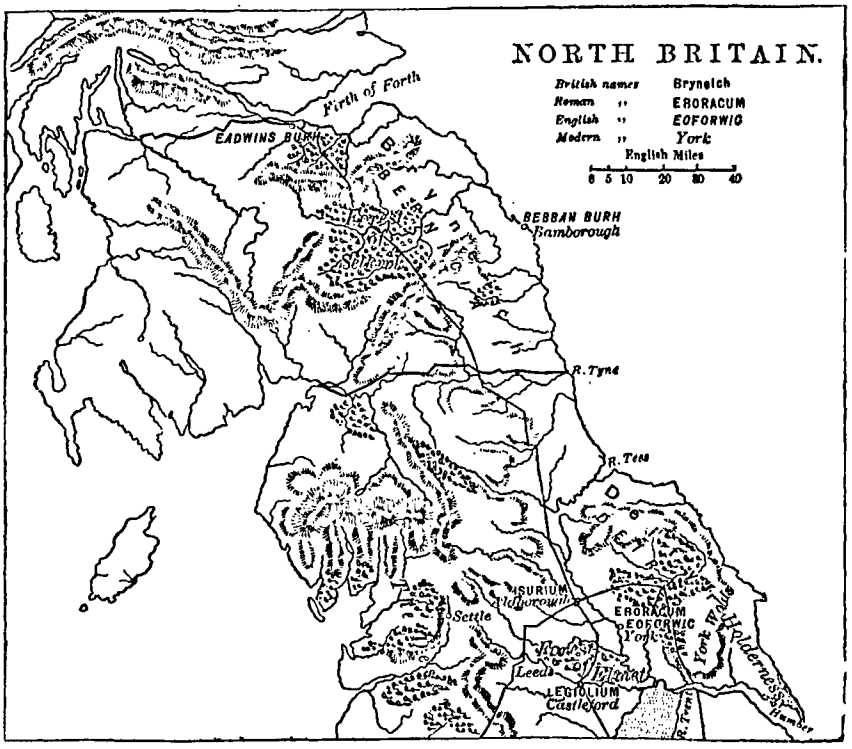
who may have made their last stand against the savage marauders.

Raids such as those of the Picts, however, destructive as they must have been, were but passing incidents in the life of Northern Britain, for like the later Highlander the Pict seems to have gathered his booty only

The Engle in Northern Britain



to withdraw with it to his native hills; and on the western coast, which was mainly subject to their incursions, the Britons maintained their political existence for centuries to come. A far greater change was wrought by the marauders who assailed this region from its eastern coast. It is possible that

descents from North Germany had long since planted Frisian settlers in the valley of the Tweed, and that it is to their descents that the Firth of Forth owed its early name of the Frisian Sea.[1] If this were so, Northumbria on either side of the Cheviots cannot have been strange to the German freebooters; and the withdrawal of the legionaries would soon be followed by their appearance off its coasts. But it is not till long after this time that we catch any historical glimpses of English attack.[2] Through the dim haze of northern tradition we see a chieftain[3] struggling in battle after battle at the opening of the sixth century against invaders whose earlier raids reach to the Lennox, but who are gradually held at bay within the basin of the Tweed. Here however they seem by the midst of the sixth century to have made themselves masters of the ground. Along Lothian, or the coast between Lammermoor and the Forth, they had pushed to the little stream of the

[1] Skene, "Celtic Scotland," i. 191. Nennius calls it "Mare Freisicum," cap. 38.

[2] Nennius, sec. 56, 57. Nennius says that after Hengest's death, his son Octa passed from this district into Kent. There is nothing impossible in a Jutish attack on this coast at this early date: and it receives some support from Malmesbury, "Gesta Regum," ed. Hardy, i. p. 61, "annis enim uno minus centum Nordhanhimbri duces communi habitu contenti, sub imperio Cantuaritarum privatos agebant," till Ida's choice as king, in 547.

[3] Nennius, sec. 56. This is the Arthur, so famous afterwards in romance. Mr. Skene, who has done much to elucidate these early struggles, has identified the sites of these battles with spots in the north (see his "Celtic Scotland," i. 153-154, and more at large his "Four Ancient Books of Wales," i. 51-58); but as Dr. Guest has equally identified them with districts in the south, the matter must still be looked upon as somewhat doubtful.

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Esk, where their way was barred by the rock-fortress of Myned Agned, the site of the later Edinburgh; while south of the Lammermoor they had advanced along the loops of the Tweed as far as the vale of the Gala-Water, and up the dâles and streamlets which lie to the south and to north of it, till their advance was thrown back from the wilder hill country on the west. Here the border line of the Cattrail[1] as it strikes through Ettrick Forest marks the border of Welsh and Engle. A barrier as difficult curved round to the south in the line of the Cheviots; but between the extremity of this range and the sea a thin strip of coast offered an open pathway into the country beyond the Tweed; and Ida,—"the Flame-bearer" as the Britons called him,—a chieftain of the invaders, whom they raised in 547 to be their king, seized in this quarter a rock beside the shore, and established a base for further conquest in the fortress of Bamborough.[2]

Their settlement.

In these earlier conquests of the Bernicians, as Ida's folk were called, the settlement was as complete as in the rest of Britain. Their homes indeed must have been scantily sprinkled over the wild and half-reclaimed country; but scant as they were, these "hams" and "tons" told as plainly as in other dis-

[1] See Skene, "Celtic Scotland," i. 162.

[2] Eng. Chron. a. 547 (probably from the short chronicle annexed to Bæda's history). Bamborough, it tells us, was first enclosed by a hedge or stockade, and then by a wall. Nennius (sec. 63) says that the place took the name of Bamborough from Bebbe, the wife of Æthelfrith. It is some sixteen miles south-east of Berwick. This setting up of a kingdom under Ida is our only certain date for the Bernician settlement, and would place its probable beginning at a time which could not have been long after A.D. 500.

tricts the tale of English colonization. Dodings and Livings left their names to hamlets like Doddington and Livingston; along the wild coast Tynings and Coldings made their fisher-villages at Tyningham and Coldingham; while Elphinston and Edmonston preserve the memory of English Elphins and Edmonds who raised their homesteads along the Teviot and the Tweed. Nowhere indeed has the English tongue been preserved in greater purity than in the district which now calls itself southern Scotland.[1] But the years that had been spent in winning this little tract show that the Bernician force was but a small one; and the continued slowness of their southward advance from Bamborough proves that even after the union under Ida their strength was but little increased. Aided as they were by a civil strife which was breaking the strength of the north-western Britons,[2] Ida and Ida's six sons had to battle along the coast for half-a-century more before they could drive the Welsh over the western moorlands, and claim for their own the little valleys of the streams which fell from these moors to the sea through the modern Northumberland.[3]

[1] See Murray, "Northumbrian English."

[2] Thus Ida's third successor, Hussa, fought against four British Kings, Urbgen, Riderchen, Guallanc, and Morcant (Geneal. at end of Nennius). These petty chieftains show how the country was broken up. See for this war, Skene, "Four Ancient Books of Wales," i. 336 *et seq.*

[3] Our knowledge of the struggle is drawn from what seems to be a bit of genuine Northumbrian chronicle, embedded in the compilation of Nennius, sec. 63. The strife was long and doubtful; "in illo tempore aliquando hostes, nunc cives, vincebantur." Ida reigned till 559 (Eng. Chron. a. 547).

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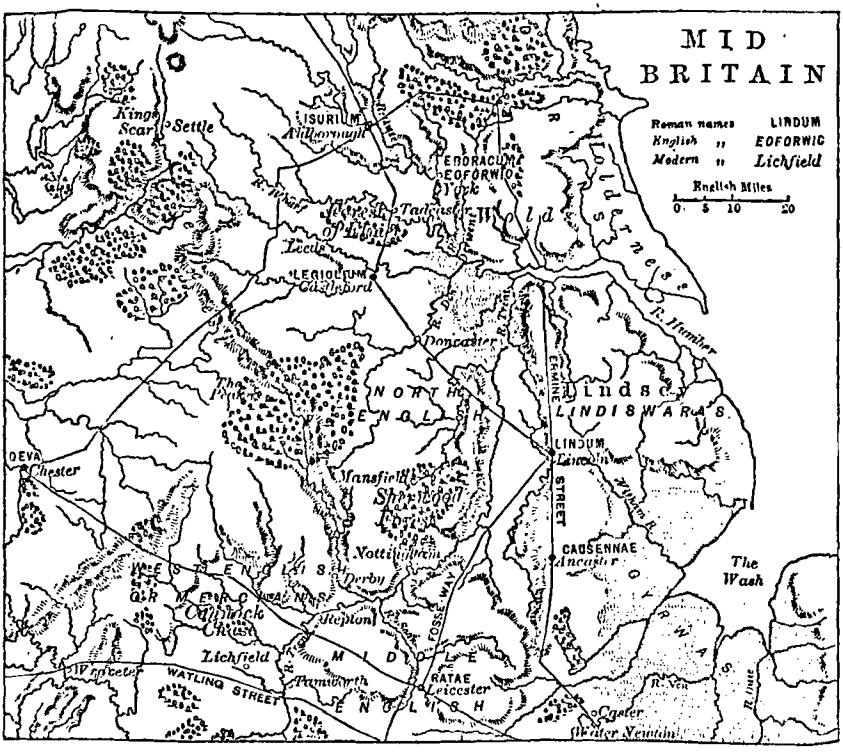
Conquests of the Engle.

c. 500-c. 570.

The Valley of the Trent.

From the wild moors of Northumbria however we must pass southward to what was probably a yet later scene of Engle conquest in the valley of the Trent. Little as we know of the winning of the north, we know less of the winning of central Britain, and not a single record has been left of the progress of the



peoples whom we find settled at the close of the century in the districts of our Nottingham, our Leicester, and our Northampton, or on the head waters of the Trent. As their names show, they were of Engle race, and we shall at a later period in our story find reason to believe that their inroads and

settlements cannot have taken place at a very early period in the sixth century. There was little indeed at this time to draw invaders to central Britain. At the close of the Roman occupation the basin of the Trent remained one of the wildest and least frequented parts of the island. The lofty and broken moorlands of the Peak, in which the Pennine range as it runs southward from the Cheviots at last juts into the heart of Britain, were fringed, as they sloped to the plain, by a semicircle of woodlands, round the edge of which the river bent closely in the curve which it makes from its springs to the Humber. On the western flank of the moors a forest known afterwards as Needwood filled up the whole space between the Peak and the Trent, as far as our Burton. On their eastern flank the forest of Sherwood stretched from the outskirts of our Nottingham to a huge swamp into which the Trent widened as it reached the Humber. Here indeed a thin line of clay country remained open on the northern bank of the river, but elsewhere it was only on its southern bank that any space could be found for human settlement. But even on this bank such spaces were small and broken, for to the south-west the moorlands threw an outlier across the river in the bleak upland of Cannock Chase, which stretched almost to the verge of the Forest of Arden, a mighty woodland that rolled away far over southern Staffordshire nearly to the Cotswolds; while in the very centre of the valley they threw a second outlier across the Trent in the rugged fastnesses of Charnwood, which stretched as far as the outskirts of Leicester. Even the open oolitic country that

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extended from Charnwood to the borders of Lincolnshire was narrowly bounded to the south by the fastnesses of Rockingham forest, which occupied one half of the modern shire of Northampton.

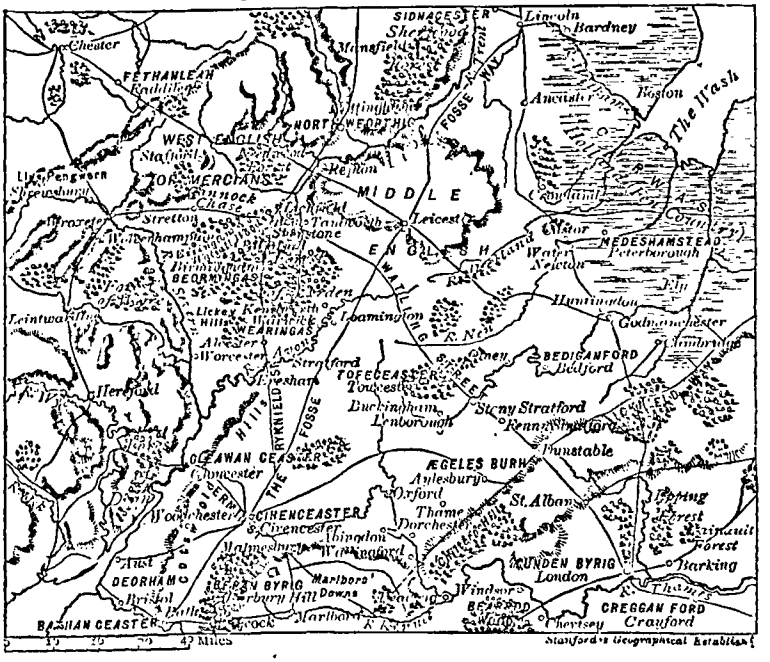
Attack on the Trent valley.

It was in this tract, along the southern bank of the river however, that settlement was most possible, as it was here that the Trent basin was first accessible to the new settlers. While the bulk of the Lindiswaras were slowly pushing their way through the fastnesses of Kesteven to their southern border on the Witham and at Stamford, smaller bodies may well have been descending into the valley of the Trent. From Lindum indeed one of the great lines of British communication led straight into this district. The Fosse road, as it crossed Britain from Ilchester to Lincoln, following for the most part the northern slope of the oolitic range, struck by Leicester through the broken country to the south of the Trent before it climbed again to the upland at Lindum. If they marched by this road from their uplands the Lindiswara would touch the river at Farndon, a village not far from the later Newark, and the name of the station which occupied this site[1] (Ad Pontem or Bridge-road) shows that a bridge here led into the districts across it. In this quarter, however, there was little to be won. On the rising ground that formed the outskirts of the Peak, along a line of some twenty miles from our Nottingham to Worksop, vast masses of oak and birch,

[1] "Ad Pontem" and the Tiowulfing-ceaster which succeeded it (Bæda, H. E. lib. ii. c. 16) have been identified with Newark, Southwell, and other places. It seems certainly to be Farndon.

broken by barren reaches of heather, formed the mighty Sherwood, whose relics may still be seen in the woods of Welbeck, or Thoresby, or Clumber, and whose memory lingers in the tale of Robin Hood.[1] Between forest and river lay but a thin strip of open clay land, with lifts of soft sandstone here and there

CENTRAL BRITAIN.



along the banks of the Trent; and on the slopes of one of these lifts, whose face had been long ago pierced with the cave-dwellings of primæval man, the house of the Snotingas fixed a home which has grown into our Nottingham. But the main settlement of the

[1] The skirts of Sherwood came down to the very north of Southwell in the valley of the Trent.

CHAP. II. Conquests of the Engle. c. 500-c. 570.

conquerors along the lower Trent must have been in the little dales that break the picturesque wold country that lies to the south of the river, and through which they pushed along its course as far as its junction with the Soar.

Ratæ.

Here, however, their course may have been barred for a while. Behind the lower course of the Soar, from the neighbourhood of Leicester by the craggy hills of Mount Sorrell, and past Loughborough to the steep rise of Castle Donington beside the Trent, lay the outliers of Charnwood, a rugged tract of granite peaks and dark woodlands that reached westwards as far as Ashby-de-la-Zouch, a tract where—as the later legend of the country-side ran—"a squirrel might hop for miles from tree to tree, and a man journey in summer time from Barden Hill to Beaumanoir without once seeing the sun." Only a few scattered oaks survive of the forest where the Prior of Alverscroft hunted in later days with hawk and hound, or where Ascham found Lady Jane Grey busy with her Plato, but much of the region is still a wild and lonely one, and recalls the great fastness whose front may have held the Engle[1] at bay. But if their advance across the lower Soar was barred, the Foss Road by which they had descended from the Lincoln heights furnished an easy road to a richer spoil. Bending southward from the line of the Trent, it passed over the wolds to a point where the little Wreak joins the Soar, and then struck along the Soar

[1] This is, however, a mere inference from the border of Nottinghamshire in this quarter, and the physical character of the country beyond it.

to Ratæ. Ratæ, the predecessor of our Leicester,[1] seems to have been the largest and most important town in Mid-Britain. Fragments of columns and capitals, wine-jars and brooches, with mosaic pavements from villas which stood without its gates, are all that are left nowadays of its glories, though the basement of a temple of Janus was still recognised there in the twelfth century,[2] and a big piece of ruined masonry may preserve the memory of the wall that yielded to the English onset. When its capture was over, the site of the town lay lonely and deserted in the midst of the woodlands through which the Soar even in the middle ages still wound its way to the Trent; and the only trace of its older life lingers on in the name of Leicester,[3] which clung to its ruins and passed to the town that rose among them as well as to the shire which represents the settlement of its conquerors.

The Gyrwas.

The winning of the triangular space of rock and woodland which stretched from Ashby to the Trent was probably the latest work of the Middle-English, as the men of our Leicestershire and perhaps our Nottinghamshire came to be called,[4] but we cannot

[1] For Ratæ, see Thompson's "English Municipal History," p. 32, and his "Handbook to Leicester." A large number of Roman remains are preserved in its museum.

[2] By Geoffry of Monmouth (Wright, "Celt, Roman, and Saxon," 152, *note*).

[3] "Legoracensis civitas" (Stubbs and Haddan, "Councils," iii. 129) in eighth century: Lege-ceaster in tenth.

[4] Bæda gives together "Orientales Angli, Mediterranei Angli, Merci, tota Nordanhymbrorum progenies," as the Engle peoples of Mid-Britain (H. E. i. 15), "Middle-Angli id est, Mediterranei

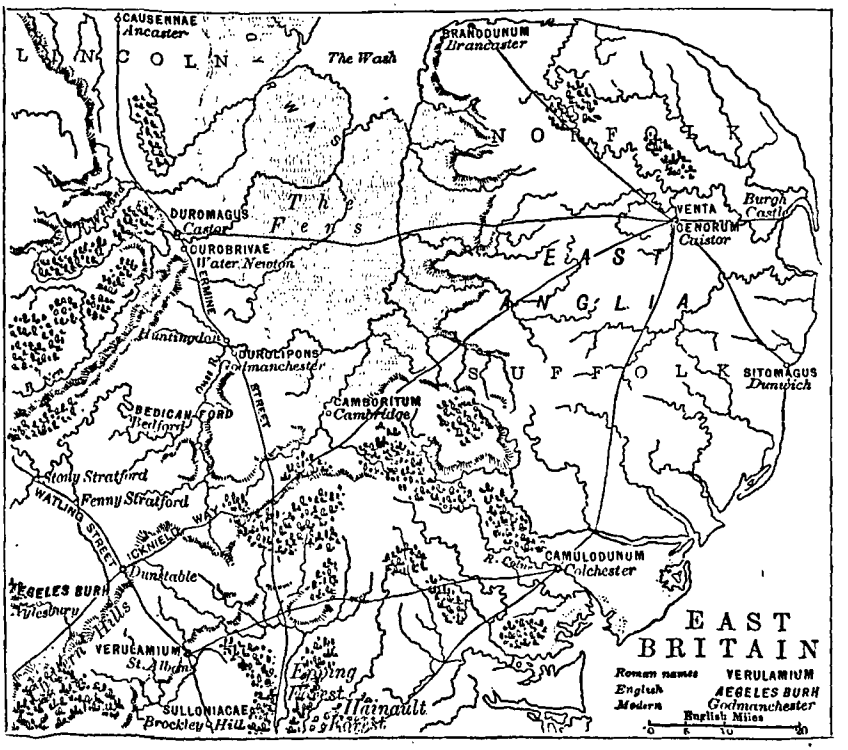
CHAP. II. Conquests of the Engle. c. 500-c. 570.

follow them as they spread over the surface of their new territory, as they pushed along the valley of the Wreak, over the wolds towards Belvoir, or across the marshes of the Nar to the fields of Market Bosworth, or by the upper Soar, here shrunk to a brook, from Ratæ along the Foss Road to the borders of the great forest of Arden. Arden was a barrier which no doubt brought the invaders for a while to a standstill. But along the upper Soar they would push easily to the slopes of the uplands which lay to the south of them, and where other Engle conquerors were probably already at work. For difficult as were the fastnesses of the Wash, the Gyrwas or Fen-folk must by this time have struggled through them to sack the towns which lay along the course of the road that marked its western edge. Of these towns the northernmost seems to have occupied the site of our Ancaster, amid whose "great square stones of old buildings" and "great vaultes" the ploughshare, as late as the days of the Tudors, disclosed Roman sepulchres and Roman coins.[1] South of this, on a site marked by the village of Caistor on the Nen stood Durobrivæ, the centre of a district covered with potteries, whose kilns were dotted over the country for twenty miles round. Hundreds of potters were employed in the manufacture of its

Angli" (ib. iii. 21). With Diuma began the Bishoprick of the Middle-Engle (ib.) as of the Mercians and Lindiswara. When the large sees were parted by Theodore, Leicester became the seat of that of the Middle-English.

[1] Leland, "Itinerary," i. 28, 29. Archdeacon Trollope has examined the site, etc., of Ancaster in Archæol. Journ. vol. xxvii. 1.

wares; and the hunting-scenes, the scenes of boar-spearing and stag-chasing which they have graven on the surface of their work, lift for us a corner of the veil that shrouds the life of Roman Britain.[1] It must have been the North-Gyrwas, as their country included in later days its neighbour Peterborough,[2]



who pushed up the Nen to the conquest of Durobrivæ. Meanwhile the South-Gyrwas were at work along the line of the Ouse and the Cam, where

[1] For Durobrivæ, see Wright, "Celt, Roman, and Saxon," pp. 263-264, and a paper by Archdeacon Trollope, Archæol. Journ. vol. xxx. 127. Mr. Artis has given plates of the remains in his "Durobrivæ Illustrated."

[2] Bæda, H. E., lib. iv. c. 6.

CHAP. II. Conquests of the Engle, c. 500-c. 570.

Durolipons, near the present Huntingdon, but on the other side of the river, guarded a bridge over the Ouse, and where some miles to the south-east the country was commanded by the town of Camboritum, whose site became in later days the site of Cambridge.[1] The place was probably of importance; but so utter was its destruction that even in Bæda's day nothing was left but a few heaps of ruined stone from which the nuns of Ely fetched a sculptured sarcophagus of marble when they sought a tomb for their abbess Æthelthryth.[2]

The Engle in Northamptonshire.

Masters of the road along the borders of the Wash, the Gyrwas would naturally be drawn forward to the upland which juts from the westward into its waters, the upland of Northamptonshire. In this direction however it was difficult of access. The undulating reach of grassy meadows, broken by thick hedgerows or copses, or tree-crowned knolls, and dotted everywhere with oak or elm, which we see in the shire of to-day, was in the close of the sixth century little more than a vast woodland. Yardley Chase and the Forests of Selsey and Whittlebury are but dwindled representatives of a long barrier of copse and thicket that stretched along its south-eastern slopes, and

[1] Even after its break up into shire land the oneness of the South-Gyrwan country was recognised in the fact that there was (at least in Camden's time) but one high sheriff for the whole area. "He is chosen out of Cambridgeshire one year, out of the Isle of Ely the second, and the third out of Huntingdonshire."—Camden's "Britanniã," 1753, i. 502.

[2] Bæda, H. E. iv. c. 19. "Venerunt ad civitatulam quandam desolatam .... quæ linguâ Anglorum Granta-cæster vocatur; et mox invenerunt juxtâ muros civitatis locellum de marmore albo pulcherrime factum, operculo quoque similis lapidis aptissime tectum."

amidst whose fastnesses lay the town which is represented by our Towcester. Even as late as the middle ages the western half of its area, from the edge of the Fens as far inland as Rockingham and Kettering, was still one of the largest forests of the island; and in earlier days this forest had stretched yet further towards the Nen.[1] It was through this huge woodland that the Engle from the Wash would have to struggle as they mounted the upland; and their progress must have been a slow one. Their fellow invaders from the valley of the Soar had an easier task. Along the head waters of the Nen the upland became clearer: and though fragments of woodland such as the oak-woods that lingered on around Althorpe and Holmby linked Rockingham with the vaster forest of Arden, and thus carried on the forest line across central Britain from the Severn to the Wash, yet open spaces remained for settlement and communication.[2] It was across this clearer ground that the Watling Street struck after it had mounted from Stony-Stratford and emerged from the woods of Whittlebury; and here it was that the bulk of the new settlers raised their homes around the "home-town" of their tribe, the Hampton which was known in after days as Northampton to distinguish it from the South Hampton beside the Solent.

[1] For Rockingham and its forest, see a paper by Mr. G. T. Clark, Archæol. Journal, vol. xxxv. p. 209.

[2] By Elizabeth's day sheep-farming, for which this district was renowned, had made this part of the shire "a great open pasture" as now. But the woodlands were still thick about Towcester and Rockingham. (Camden, "Britannia," ed. 1753, vol. i. p. 511.)

CHAP. II.

Conquests of the Engle. c. 500-c. 570.

The West-Engle.

While Engle bands were thus pushing up the Soar to Ratæ and the upland which formed the southern brink of the Trent-basin, others must have been advancing along the great river beyond the bounds of the Middle-English to near its junction with the Tame. As they struck to the north up the valleys of the Derwent and the Dove into the moorlands of the Peak, these seem to have become known as the Pec-sætan, but their settlement in what was the later Derbyshire would necessarily be a scanty and unimportant one. Of far greater importance was the advance of their fellows to the west. Spreading along the quiet open meadows beside the Tame, the invaders as they fixed their "worth" of Tamworth on a little rise above its waters at their union with the Anker, saw the dark and barren moorlands of Cannock Chase stretching like a barrier across their path. Lichfield, "the field of the dead," may, as the local tradition ran, mark the place of some fight that left them masters of the ground beneath its slopes; but the Chase itself was impassable. At either end of it however a narrow gap gave access to the country in its rear. Between its northern extremity and the Needwood which lay thick along the Trent, the space along the channel of the great river was widened by the little valley of the Sow. Between its southern end and the dark edge of Arden, which then ran to the north of our Walsall and Wolverhampton, interposed a like gap of open country through which the Watling Street passed on its way to the Severn. By both of these openings the West-Engle, as this folk of conquerors at first called itself, pushed into the open tract between Cannock and the low line of

moorlands thrown down from the heights of Mole Cop in the north, which marks the water-parting between the basins of the Severn and of the Trent. Stafford, the "Stone-ford," marks their passage over the Sow to the head-waters of the great river which had led them through the heart of central Britain, though the woods thrown out from Needwood across the district of Trentham must have long hindered them from penetrating to its northern founts. Here however they were brought for a while to a stand; for that these moorlands long remained a march or border-land between Engle and Welshman we see from the name by which the West-English became more commonly known, the Mercians, or the Men of the March.[1]

[1] The date of the conquest of Mercia can only be a matter of inference, as we have no record of any part of the winning of central Britain. Florence of Worcester, ed. Thorpe (vol. i. 264) says, "post initium regni Cantuariorum principium exstitit regni Merciorum," which tells us nothing; but if Penda was (E. Chron. a. 626) fifty when he began his reign in 626 (Bæda, ii. 20, seems to put this in 633), he was born about 576, when we may take it his people were already on the upper Trent. This squares with Huntingdon's statement, "Regnum Merce incipit, quod Crida ut ex scriptis conjicere possumus primus obtinuit" (Hist. Angl. ed. Arnold, p. 53), a fact which he inserts between Ceawlin's overthrow at Fethanlea in 584 and his death in 593. Crida, or Creoda, was Penda's grandfather; "Penda was the son of Pybba, Pybba of Creoda" (Engl. Chron. a. 626). The setting up of a king would no doubt follow here as elsewhere a period of conquest under Ealdormen which would carry us back to near the middle of the century for the first attack on the head waters of the Trent. The conquests of the Middle-Engle would of course precede those of the Mercians. We may gather from the limits of the Bishoprick of the Mercians that the Pecsætan of our Derbyshire were only a part of these West-Engle.

CHAPTER III.

CONQUESTS OF THE SAXONS.

c. 500—577.

The West-Saxons.

WITH the settlement of the Mercians the work of the Engle in central and northern Britain was done. But we have still to follow the work of the conquerors who through the same memorable years had been making themselves masters of the south. While the Engle had been winning one flank of the Saxon Shore, the Saxons were as slowly winning an even more important district on its other flank.[1] To westward of the strip of coast between the Andredsweald and the sea which had been won by the warbands of Ælla, the alluvial flat whose inlets had drawn the South-Saxons to their landing in Chichester Water broadened into a wider tract around a greater estuary, that of the Southampton Water, as it strikes inland from the sea-channels of the Solent and Spithead. This opening in the coast was already recognised as of both military and commercial importance. It was the one break in the long line of forests which,

[1] From this point we are again on distinctly historic ground, as the Chronicle records every step in the conquest of Wessex.

whether by the fastnesses of the Andredsweald or by the hardly less formidable fastnesses of our Dorset, stretched like a natural barrier along the whole southern coast of Britain; for though woodlands lay even here along the shore, it was in a thin line broken by the estuary and by the channels of its tributaries, and cleft by the roads that run from Winchester to Porchester or along the valley of the Itchen.[1] By either estuary or roads it was easy to reach the upland of the Gwent, and to strike across it into the very heart of Britain. The importance of such a point was shown by the resolute resistance of its defenders; and the Saxons who attacked it during the latter years of the fifth century seem to have failed to make any permanent settlement along the coast. The descents of their leaders, Cerdic and Cynric, in 495[2] at the mouth of the Itchen, and a fresh descent on Porchester in 501,[3] can have been little more than plunder raids; and though in 508[4] a far more serious conflict ended in the fall of five thousand Britons and their chief, it was not till 514 that the tribe whose older name seems to have been that of the Gewissas, but who were to be more widely known as the West-Saxons, actually landed with a view to definite conquest.[5]

[1] For these woodlands, see Guest, E. E. Sett., pp. 31, 32. I again follow mainly the guidance of this paper, as far as the West-Saxon conquests are concerned, up to the battle of Bedford.

[2] E. Chron. a. 495. [3] E. Chron. a. 501.

[4] E. Chron. a. 508, and Huntingdon, H. A. ed. Arnold, p. 46, who adds that the West-Sexe were aided here by the Kentish men and South-Sexe.

[5] E. Chron. a. 514. My inferences from the entries in the Chronicle are here somewhat different from those of Dr. Guest,

CHAP. III.

Conquests of the Saxons.

c. 500-577.

Conquest of Hampshire and Isle of Wight.

Pushing up the Itchen to the plunder of Winchester, they must have been already masters of the downs around it when they turned to clear the Britons from the forests in their rear; for a fight at Charford on the Lower Avon in 519 seems to mark the close of a conflict in which the provincials were driven from the woodlands whose shrunken remains meet us in the

New Forest, and in which the whole district between the Andredsweald and the Lower Avon was secured for English holding.[1] The success at Charford was followed

nor have I felt justified in adopting his ingenious theory as to the struggle of 508. See Guest, E. E. Sett. pp. 55-60.

[1] E. Chron. a. 519; Æthelweard, a. 519.

by the political organization of the conquerors; and Cerdic and Cynric became kings of the West-Saxons.[1] Here however their success came to an end. Across Avon the forest belt again thickened into a barrier that held the invaders at bay; for when in the following year, 520, they clove their way through it to the valley of the Frome, eager perhaps for the sack of a city whose site is marked by our Dorchester, they were met by the Britons at Badbury or Mount Badon,[2] and thrown back in what after events show to have been a crushing defeat. The border-line of our Hampshire to the west still marks the point at which the progress of the Gewissas was arrested by this overthrow;[3] and how severe was the check is shown by the long cessation of any advance in this quarter. We hear only of a single battle of the West-Sexe[4] during the rest of the reign of Cerdic; while the Jutes who had aided in his descents, and who had struck up the Hamble to a clearing along its course where the villages of Meon Stoke and West and East Meon still preserve a memory of their settlement of the Meonwara,[5] turned

[1] E. Chron. a. 519.

[2] Gildas, Hist. sec. 26. For the identification of this battle with that of Mount Badon, and of its site with Badbury in Dorsetshire, see Guest, E. E. Sett. pp. 61-63.

[3] The position of Sorbiodunum, which was still in British hands, gives at least one firm standpoint in the question of West-Saxon boundaries at this time. The limits which Guest assigns them (E. E. Sett. pp. 64-65) to north and east—reaching as far as the Cherwell and Englefield—seem to me inconsistent with their later campaigns; in fact, I can hardly doubt that Hampshire, as a whole, represents the West-Saxon kingdom after 520.

[4] English Chron. a. 527.

[5] Bæda, H. E. i. 15. "De Jutarum origine sunt Cantuarii et Vectuarii, hoc est, ea gens quæ Vectam tenet insulam, et ea quæ

CHAP. III. Conquests of the Saxons. c. 500-577.

to the conquest of the island that lay off the Solent. In 530 Cerdic and Cynric subdued the Isle of Wight, but it was in the interest not of their own people but of its allies, for the new settlers of the island, the Wightgara, whose name survives in their town of Carisbrook or Wight-gara-burh, were not West-Sexe but Jutes.[1] Small as it was, the conquest was a memorable one; for with it ended for centuries the work of the Jutes in Britain. Causes which are hidden from us must have diverted their energies elsewhere; the winning of Britain was left to the Saxon and the Engle; and it was not till Britain was won that the Jutes returned to dispute it with their old allies under the name of the Danes.[2]

Pause of West-Saxons.

But the conquest of the isle had hardly less significance for the West-Sexe themselves. If they turned to the sea, it was that landwards all progress seemed denied them. Not only had the woodlands of the coast proved impassable, but the invaders of the Gwent found barriers almost as strong on every side. Higher up on their western border the fortress of Sorbiodunum, or Old Sarum, guarded the valley of the Avon and blocked the way to Salisbury Plain, while to eastward of the Gwent ran the thickets of the Andredsweald, and beneath its northern escarpment stretched a forest which for centuries to come filled

usque hodie in provincia occidentalium Saxonum Jutarum natio nominatur, posita contra ipsam insulam Vectam." Politically the Meonwara went with the Isle of Wight, and not with Wessex. See Wulfere's grant to Ædilwalch; Bæda, H. E. iv. 13.

[1] See passage quoted above. Bæda, H. E. i. 15.

[2] Stubbs, Const. Hist. i. 46.

the valley of the Kennet. The strength of these natural barriers was doubled by strongholds which furnished the Britons with bases for defensive operations as well as with supplies of fighting men, for while Silchester or Calleva barred the march of the Gewissas across the tract between the Andredsweald and the Thames, Cunetio, on the site of our Marlborough, held the downs to the north, and guarded the road that led from Winchester to the Severn valley. How formidable these obstacles were we see from the long inaction of the West-Saxons. While the Engle in the north were slowly fighting their way across Yorkshire or Lincolnshire, their rivals in the south lay quiet for thirty years within the limits of our Hampshire. From the position indeed of their central "tun" of Hampton, our Southampton, it would seem as if their main settlement was still on the coast, and as if the ruins of Winchester were left silent and deserted in the upper downs.

Sorbiodunum.

What broke this inaction, whether the Britons had grown weaker, or whether fresh reinforcements had strengthened their opponents, we do not know. We hear only that Cynric, whom Cerdic's death left King of the West-Saxons, again took up the work of invasion in 552 by a fresh advance on the west.[1] Winchester was the meeting-point of five Roman roads; and of these one struck directly westward, along the northern skirts of the woodlands that filled the space between the lower Itchen and the mid-valley of the Avon, to the fortress of Old Sarum.[2] Celt and Roman

[1] E. Chron. a. 552.

[2] See map in Guest; E. E. Settlements in Southern Britain.

CHAP. III. Conquests of the Saxons. c. 500-577.

alike had seen the military value of the height from which the eye sweeps nowadays over the grassy meadows of the Avon to the arrowy spire of Salisbury; and admirable as the position was in itself, it had been strengthened at a vast cost of labour. The camp on the summit of the knoll was girt in by a trench hewn so deeply in the chalk that from the inner side of it the white face of the rampart rose a hundred feet high, while strong outworks protected the approaches to the fortress from the west and from the east.[1] Arms must have been useless against such a stronghold as this; and, though the Britons were "put to flight" before its investment, the reduction of Sorbiodunum was probably due rather to famine or want of water than to the sword.

Conquest of Wiltshire.

But its fall brought with it the easy winning of the district which it guarded, as well as the downs on whose edge stood the strange monument, then as now an object of wonder, to which the conquerors as they marched beside its mystic circle gave the name of the Hanging Stones, Stonehenge. The Gewissas passed over the Stratford, or paved ford by which the road they had followed from Winchester passed the river, to the westernmost reaches of the Gwent, the district we now know as Salisbury Plain. To the south of them as they marched, behind the lower Avon and its little affluent of the Nadder, a broken and woodland country whose memory lingers in Cranbourne Chase screened the later Dorsetshire from their arms;[2] but

[1] G. J. Clark, "Earthworks of the Wiltshire Avon." Archæol. Jour. xxxii. 290.

[2] The name of "Britford," which still clings to a passage over

in their front the open downs offered no line of defence, and the Gewissas could push along the road from Old Sarum unhindered till they reached the steep slope down which the upland fell into the valley of the Frome. How roughly their march was checked at this point by the dense forests which filled the Frome valley we see from the fact that these woodlands remained in British hands for more than a hundred years; and the significant name of "Mere" preserves for us the memory of the border-bound which the Gewissas were forced to draw along the western steeps of their new conquest. The conquerors turned back to settle in the land they had won, in the river valleys which scored the surface of the downs, in the tiny bends and grassy nooks of the vale of Avon, or in the meadows along the course of its affluent, the Wil or Wiley. It was probably in the last that the main body of the invaders fixed their home, for it was the Wiley, and the little township, or Wil-ton, which rose beside it, which gave them from this time their new name of Wil-sætas. From this time, indeed, the Gewissas, or West-Saxons, felt the need of local names for the peoples into which conquest broke them as they pushed over the country. But the character of these names shows the looseness of the bonds that held such "folks" together. Each knew itself simply as a group of "sætan" or "settlers" in the land it had won, Wilt-sætan in the lands about the Wiley, Dor-sætan in the forest tract through which wound the "dwr" or

the Avon in this quarter, may mark a point in the new border-line where the Briton still faced his foe.

CHAP. III. Conquests of the Saxons. c. 500-577.

dark water of the Frome, Somer-sætan or Defna-sætan in lands yet more to the west.

Cynric's advance.

But there was little to detain Cynric in the tiny vales and bare reaches of upland which his arms had as yet given him; and in 556, only four years after the fall of Old Sarum, he pushed forward again along a road that led from Winchester north-westward in the direction of Cirencester and the Severn. Descending the deep escarpment which forms the northern face of the Hampshire downs, he threaded his way through the woodlands of the Vale of Pewsey, whose relics survive in the Forest of Savernake, and again mounted the slopes on the further side of them. Here he made himself master of the town of Cunetio and of the upland which lay about it by a victory on the very brink of the downs at Barbury Hill.[1] The ground, however, of which he thus became lord was far from affording any obstacle to further advance; on the contrary, its very character seemed to draw the Gewissas onward to new aggressions. The Marlborough Downs are in fact the starting-point from which the second and greatest of its chalk-ranges runs across Southern Britain. The upland trends to the north-east under the name of the Ilsley Downs till it reaches a gap through which the Thames strikes southward to its lower river-valley; then rising again in the Chilterns, it broadens at last into the Gwent in which the East-Anglians had found a home. In its earlier

1 "Byran-byrig," E. Chron. a. 556; Guest, E. E. Sett. 67; Huntingdon, H. A. ed. Arnold, p. 51, gives large details of this battle, but we do not know his authority for them.

course this range naturally called Cynric's men to a fresh advance; for from the downs above Marlborough the high ground runs on without a break to the course of the Thames. This tract, however, like that which they had traversed in the Gwent, must have been a scantily-peopled one; and its invaders would turn with eagerness to the more tempting district which lay in the lower ground on either side of it. The northern face of the downs consists of a line of steep cliffs, looking out over a vale through which the stream of the Ock pours its waters into the Thames. On the face of this escarpment the traveller still sees, drawn white against the scanty turf, the gigantic form of a horse which gives the Vale of White Horse its name, and which tradition looks on as a work of the conquering Gewissas. Another monument of their winning of this district lingers in the rude stones called Weyland Smith's House, a cromlech of primæval times where the Saxons found a dwelling-place for the weird legend of a hero-smith which they brought with them from their German homeland.

Conquest of Berkshire.

The White Horse glimmers over a broad and fertile region, whose local names recall for us the settlement of the conquerors in hamlets that have grown into quiet little towns like Wantage, the future birthplace of Ælfred, or in homesteads that crowned the low rises or "duns" which overlooked the valley, such as the dun where the Farrings planted their Farringdon, or another dun at the confluence of the Ock and the Thames, where the West-Saxon Abba chose the site for a dwelling-

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place which grew in later days into our Abingdon. On the south the downs fell in gentler slopes to the vale of the Kennet, whose silvery stream ran through masses of woodland, past the ford at Hungerford and the "new burh" of the conquerors which survives in Newbury, to the low and swampy meadows where it meets the Thames, as the river bursts from its cleft through the chalk-range to open out into its lower valley. In these meadows the house of the Readings planted a settlement which has grown into the busy town that preserves their name. Still further to the east the invaders pushed their way into the tangled woodland that stretched along the low clay flats which bordered the southern bank of the Thames, and where the predominance of the box, or bearroc, may have given in after days its name of "Bearrocshire" or Berkshire to the whole tract of valley and down which this fresh advance added to the dominions of the West-Saxons.[1]

The Valley of the Thames.

With its conquest the winning of the southern uplands was complete. And with the winning of these uplands the whole island lay open to the Gewissas; for the Andredsweald, which had held back the invader for half a century, was turned as soon as the West-Saxons stood masters of the southern Gwent, and their country now jutted forward like a huge bastion into the heart of unconquered Britain. Only on one side were the obstacles in their way still serious. The woods of Dorsetshire, with the thick wedge of forest which blocked the valley of the

[1] For these woodlands see Guest's E. E. Sett., p. 32. The Kennet valley was not disafforested till the time of Henry III.

Frome beneath the Wiltshire downs, were for long years to hold any western advance at bay; but elsewhere the land was open to their attack. On the north-west easy slopes led to the crest of the Cotswolds, from whence the Severn valley lay before them for their prey. On the north their march would find no natural obstacles as it passed up the Cherwell valley to penetrate either to the central plain of Britain or to the Wash. Above all, to the eastward opened before them the valley of the Thames. From its springs near the crest of the Cotswolds the river falls quietly to the low ground beneath the Marlborough Downs, and then turns abruptly to the south to hew a channel through the line of chalk uplands, and thus part the Berkshire heights from the Chilterns. Once out of this narrow gorge it bends round the woodlands where the advanced guard of Cynric's men were feeling their way into the fastnesses about Windsor, and rolling in a slower and larger current eastward through the wide valley that lies between the North Downs and the East Anglian heights, after a course of two hundred miles it reaches its estuary and the sea.

Its defences.

No road can have seemed so tempting to the earlier invaders as this water-road of the Thames, leading as it did straight from the Channel to the heart of Britain through an open and fruitful country; and it was by this road that their advance seemed destined to be made when they settled on either side of its estuary in Essex and in Kent. But a century had passed since these settlements, and the Thames valley still remained untouched. Tempting as the

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road seemed, indeed, no inlet into Britain was more effectually barred. On either side the river-mouth, at but little distance from the coast on which East-Saxon and Kentishman were encamped, long belts of woodland and fen stretched to the very brink of the Thames. On the south of it the fastnesses of the Weald found their line of defence prolonged by huge swamps that stretched to the river, and whose memory is still preserved by the local names as by the local floods of Rotherhithe and Bermondsey. To the north as formidable a line of defence presented itself in the tangled forest whose last relics survive in the woods of Epping and in the name of Hainault, and this barrier of woodland was backed by the swamps of the lower Lea to the rear of it. The one line of advance in fact open to an invader was the course of the Thames itself, and the course of the Thames was blocked by the fortress of London.

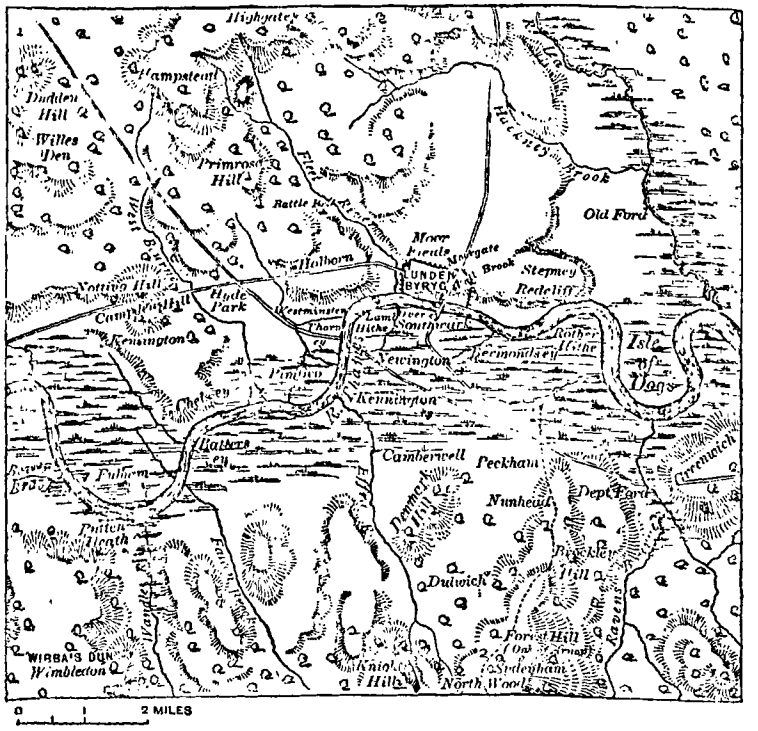
The site of London.

The commercial greatness of London has made men forget its military importance, but from the first moment of its history till late into the middle ages London was one of the strongest of our fortresses. Its site, indeed, must have been dictated, like that of most early cities, by the advantages which it presented as well for defence as for trade.[1] It stood at the one point by which either merchant or invader could penetrate from the estuary into the valley of the

[1] Rev. W. J. Loftie, "London before the Houses," Macmillan's Magazine, vol. xxxiv. p. 356. To this paper we may add Dr. Guest's remarks on ancient Middlesex in his "Aulus Plautius," Archæol. Journ. vol. xxiii. p. 159. See too Quarterly Review, July, 1880, "Middlesex."

Thames; and in its earlier days, before the great changes wrought by the embankment of the Romans, this was also the first point at which any rising ground for the site of such a town presented itself on either shore of the river. Nowhere has the hand of man moulded ground into shapes more strangely

EARLY LONDON.
(Local names around of later date.)



contrasted with its natural form than on the site of London. Even as late as the time of Cæsar the soil which a large part of it covers can have been little but a vast morass. Below Fulham the river stretched at high tide over the ground that lies on either side

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of its present channel from the rises of Kensington and Hyde Park to the opposite shores of Peckham and Camberwell. All Pimlico and Westminster to the north, to the south all Battersea and Lambeth, all Newington and Kennington, all Bermondsey and Rotherhithe, formed a vast lagoon, broken only by little rises which became the "eyes" and "hithes," the "islands" and "landing-rises," of later settlements. Yet lower down to the eastward the swamp widened as the Lea poured its waters into the Thames in an estuary of its own, an estuary which ran far to the north over as wide an expanse of marsh and fen, while at its mouth it stretched its tidal waters over the mud flats which have been turned by embankment into the Isle of Dogs.[1] Near the point where the two rivers meet, a traveller who was mounting the Thames from the sea saw the first dry land to which his bark could steer. The spot was in fact the extremity of a low line of rising ground which was thrown out from the heights of Hampstead that border the river valley to the north, and which passed over the sites of our Hyde Park and Holborn to thrust itself on the east

[1] Guest, Aulus Plautius, Archæol. Journ. xxiii. p. 179. "When the Romans under Aulus Plautius came down the Watling Street to the neighbourhood of London, they saw before them a wide expanse of marsh and mud bank, which twice every day assumed the character of an estuary sufficiently large to excuse, if not to justify, the statement of Dion, that the river there emptied itself into the ocean. No dykes then retained the water within certain limits. One arm of this great wash stretched northward up the valley of the Lea, and the other westward up the valley of the Thames." "The name of London refers directly to the marshes, though I cannot here enter into a philological argument to prove the fact" (p. 180).

into the great morass. This eastern portion of it, however, was severed from the rest of the rise by the deep gorge of a stream that fell from the northern hills, the stream of the Fleet, whose waters, long since lost in London sewers, ran in earlier days between steep banks—banks that still leave their impress in the local levels, and in local names like Snow Hill—to the Thames at Blackfriars.

Not a British Town.

The rise or "dun" that stretched from this tidal channel of the Fleet to the spot now marked by the Tower, and which was destined to become the site of London, rose at its highest some fifty feet above the level of the tide, and was broken into two parts by a ravine through which ran the stream which has since been known as the Wallbrook. Such a position was admirably adapted for defence; it was indeed almost impregnable. Sheltered to east and south by the lagoons of the Lea and the Thames, guarded to westward by the deep cleft of the Fleet, it saw stretching along its northern border the broad fen whose name has survived in our modern Moorgate. Nor, as the first point at which merchants could land from the great river, was the spot less adapted for trade. But it was long before the trader found dwelling on its soil. Old as it is, London is far from being one of the oldest of British cities; till the coming of the Romans, indeed, the loneliness of its site seems to have been unbroken by any settlement whatever. The "dun" was in fact the centre of a vast wilderness. Beyond the marshes to the east lay the forest track of southern Essex. Across the lagoon to the south rose the woodlands of Sydenham and

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Forest Hill, themselves but advance guards of the fastnesses of the Weald. To the north the heights of Highgate and Hampstead were crowned with forest-masses, through which the boar and the wild ox wandered without fear of man down to the days of the Plantagenets. Even the open country to the west was but a waste. It seems to have formed the border-land between two British tribes who dwelt in Hertford and in Essex, and its barren clays were given over to solitude by the usages of primæval war.[1]

Roman London.

With the coming of the Roman, however, this solitude passed away.[2] We know nothing of the

1 Guest, Aulus Plautius, Archæol. Journ. xxiii. 167; "merely a march of the Catuvellauni, a common through which ran a wide trackway, but in which was neither town, village, nor inhabited house. No doubt the Catuvellauni fed their cattle in the march, and there may have been shealings here to shelter their herdsmen." "I have little doubt that between Brockley Hill and the Thames all was wilderness from the Lea to the Brent."

2 Guest (Aulus Plautius, Archæol. Journ. xxiii. p. 180) suggests the Roman origin of London. "When in the autumn of 43 Aulus Plautius drew the lines of circumvallation round his camp, I believe he founded the present metropolis of Britain. The notion entertained by some antiquaries, that a British town preceded the Roman camp, has no foundation to rest upon, and is inconsistent with all we know of the early geography of this part of Britain." Much has been made of its name, but "Llyn-dyn," or whatever the Celtic form may be, is as likely to be the designation of a spot as of a town on it. An almost conclusive proof, however, that no such town existed west of the Fleet may be drawn from the line of the old British road from Kent (the predecessor of the Watling Street), which, instead of crossing the river as in Roman and later times at the point marked by London Bridge, passed, according to Higden, to a point opposite Westminster, and

settlement of the town; but its advantages as the first landing-place along the Thames secured for it at once the command of all trading intercourse with Gaul, and through Gaul with the Empire at large.[1] So rapid was its growth that only a few years after the landing of Claudius London had risen into a flourishing port, the massacre of whose foreign traders was the darkest blot on the British rising under Boadicea.[2] But the town soon recovered from the blow. If York became the official capital of the province, London formed its actual centre, for by one of the many advantages of its site it was necessarily the point from which the roads of the conquerors radiated over the island. Such a point would naturally have been found at Richborough, where the line of communication with the body of the empire passed the Channel at its narrowest part. But Kent, as we have seen, was shut in by barriers which made com-

crossing the river there struck north along the line of Park Lane and Edgware Road. (Loftie, "Roman London," Archæol. Journ. vol. xxxiv. p. 165). Such a course is inconsistent with the existence of a town on the site of the later London; in fact, the rise of such a town is the best explanation of the later change in the line of this road, which brought about its passage by the bridge.

[1] As we have seen, vessels from Gaul simply crossed the Channel to Richborough, and avoided the circuit of the North Foreland by using the channel of the Wantsum, through which they passed by Reculver into the Thames.

[2] For "Roman London," we have numerous papers, especially in the Archæologia, by Mr. Wright, Sir William Tite, Mr. Taylor, Mr. Black, and Mr. Roach Smith, and a separate treatise by the last author on "The Antiquities of Roman London." See too Mr. Loftie's "Roman London" in Archæological Journal, vol. xxxiv. p. 164.

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munication with the rest of the island impracticable, save at the single spot where the road, thus drawn inland from Richborough, found a practicable passage over the Thames. And this spot was at London. For London was the lowest ground on the tidal waters of the river on which it was possible to build a bridge, and even before a bridge was built, it was the lowest ground where passage could be gained by a ferry. But once over the river, the difficulty of divergence was removed, and it was thus that roads struck from London to every quarter of Britain.[1] As the meeting-point of these roads, the point of their contact with the lines of communication between the province and the empire, as well as the natural port for the bulk of its trade, which then lay exclusively with the Mediterranean and the Channel, London could not fail to grow fast in population and wealth.

Its Growth.

From the traces of burial indeed, which we find over part of the ground, it seems almost certain that the earlier city was far from extending over the whole of the space embraced within the existing Roman walls. It is possible that Londinium at first only occupied the height to the eastward of the Wallbrook, which then ran in a deep channel to its little port at Dowgate, and that its northern bound was marked by a trench whose memory survives in the name of our "Langbourne" Ward; while the ground to the westward as far as the Fleet was still open and

[1] Roads such as the Foss Road or the Icknield Way are of earlier than Roman date; and their direction was determined by very different social and political circumstances from those of Britain in the Roman times. (See Guest, Aulus Plautius, Arch. Journ. xxiii. 175.)

used for interments. But buildings soon rose over the ground outside these narrow bounds. We find traces of villas and pavements stretching over the earlier grave-grounds; and by the close of the third century at latest London had spread over the whole area of the rise east of the Fleet between the Thames and the Moor. It was this London that was girt in by the massive walls which were probably raised by Theodosius,[1] when the inroads of the Picts and the descents of the Saxons first made walls necessary for the security of towns in Britain.

Its Importance.

But the city spread even beyond these wide bounds. Houses of citizens studded the country around its walls, and bordered the roads which struck westward along the hollow bourne or Holborn, and northward along our Gracechurch Street. Outside the walls too lay a ring of burial-places at Shoreditch and elsewhere; while a suburb rose across the river on the site of the present Southwark. One of the most laborious works of the Roman settlers was the embankment of the lower channels of the Thames and of the Lea; and it was on ground thus gained from the morass across the river at our Southwark that

[1] The ease with which the Frankish soldiers, after the fall of Allectus, fell back on and plundered London suggests that it was then without defence. The reign of Valentinian seems the most probable date for raising walls after this time; and the coins found along its course point to the second half of the fourth century. There are signs too that the wall was raised in some haste, and under the pressure of urgent necessity; for it is carried over cemeteries and the sites of existing houses, covering even their encaustic pavements in its course; and fragments of building and sculptures are found worked into it.

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dwellings clustered whose number and wealth leave hardly a doubt that they were already linked by a bridge with the mother-city.[1] Of London itself, however, we know little. Tradition places a temple of Diana on the spot where the Christian missionaries raised in after time the Church of St. Paul, and here on this higher ground some statelier public buildings may have clustered round it. But the scarcity of stone and abundance of clay in its neighbourhood were fatal to any architectural pretensions; and from the character of its remains the town seems to have been little more than a mass of brick houses and red-tiled roofs, pierced with a network of the narrow alleys which passed for streets in the Roman world, and cleft throughout its area by two wider roads from the bridge. One of these led by a gate near our Bishopsgate to the northern road, the other by a line which is partly represented in our Cannon Street to Newgate and the west. But if it fell far beneath many of the British towns in its outer seeming, as it fell beneath York in official rank, London surpassed all in population and wealth. Middlesex possibly represents a district which depended on it in this earlier, as it certainly did in a later time; and the privileges of the chase, which its citizens enjoyed throughout the middle ages in the woodland that

[1] "When the foundations of the old bridge were taken up, a line of coins, ranging from the Republican period to Honorius, were found in the bed of the river. . . . . The completeness of the series can only be accounted for on the supposition that a bridge, preceded perhaps by a rope or chain ferry, was very early thrown across the Thames."—Loftie's "Roman London," Archæol. Journ. xxxiv. 172.

covered the heights of Hampstead and along the southern bank of the river as far as the Cray, may have been drawn from the rights of the Roman burghers.

London and the invaders.

In the downfall of the Imperial rule such a town would doubtless gain a virtual independence; but through the darkness of the time we catch only a passing glimpse of its life, when the Britons, after their rout at Crayford, fled from the Jutes to find shelter at "Lundenbyryg."[1] Its power, however, was seen in the arrest of the invaders as they neared its southern suburb; for the western border of Kent represents, no doubt, fairly enough the point at which the Londoners were able to hold the "Cant-wara" at bay on the edge of the morass that stretched from Southwark to the Dulwich hills. Hardly were these southern assailants brought to a standstill when London must have had to struggle against assailants on the northern bank of the river. Here, however, the attack was probably a fainter one. Not only was the line of forest and marsh along the lower channel of the Lea impenetrable, but the woodland and mud flats of southern Essex offered little temptation to the settlers who might have pressed forward in this quarter. The energies of the East-Saxons were in fact long drawn elsewhere; for their settlements lay mainly in the north of the district to which they gave their name, where a clearer and more fertile country offered them homes in the valleys of the Colne and the Stour; and even here their numbers must have been too small to push inland, for half a century

[1] Engl. Chron. a. 457.

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seems to have elapsed after their first settlement before they were strong enough to advance from the coast into the interior of the island.

Fall of Verulamium.

When the time came for such an advance, it lay naturally up the river valleys in which they had settled; and these led through thinner woodland to a point in the downs where Saffron Walden still marks an open "dene" that broke the thickets of the waste or "Weald." Once on these downs the East-Saxons found themselves encamped on the central uplands of the line of chalk heights whose extremities had already been seized by their brethren in Berkshire and by the Engle in the Eastern Counties. Though the tract was traversed by the great road which ran across Mid-Britain from London to Chester, the road to which the English gave its later name of Watling Street, it was a wild and lonely region, whose woodlands, even in the days of the Norman kings, made travel through it a dangerous business.[1] At this time it probably formed the district of Verulamium, a town which stood near the site of the present St. Alban's. Verulamium was one of the oldest towns in Britain; and, in spite of the wild tract in which it stood, its position on the main road from London across Mid-Britain gave it a wealth and importance which are still witnessed by the traces of an amphitheatre, the extent of its walls, and the expanse of ruins from which the Abbey and Abbey Church of later days were mainly constructed. Since Christianity had become the religion of the empire

[1] Guest, "Four Roman Ways," Archæol. Journ. vol. xiv. 114.

it had won celebrity as the scene of the martyrdom of a Christian soldier, Alban, who was said to have suffered under Diocletian, and whose church was a centre of Christian devotion.[1] But neither its wealth nor its sanctity saved it from the invaders. Its fall was complete; and for centuries to come the broken and charred remains of the town were left in solitude without inhabitants.[2]

Fall of London.

The fall of Verulamium and the settlement of its conquerors in the downs about it must have fallen on London as a presage of ruin. A hundred years had passed away since Hengest's men had fallen back baffled from its neighbourhood; and in the long interval its burghers may have counted themselves safe from attack. But year by year the circle of invasion had been closing round the city. The conquest of Kent had broken its communications with the Continent; and whatever trade might struggle from the southern coast through the Weald had been cut off by the conquest of Sussex. That of the Gwent about Winchester closed the road to the south-west; while the capture of Cunetio interrupted all communication with the valley of the Severn

[1] Gildas, Hist. cap. 10; Bæda, H. E. i. c. 7.

[2] Our only guides to the date of the conquest of Hertfordshire are the date of the earlier conquest of Essex, which as we have seen can hardly have been long before A.D. 500, and that of the fall of Verulamium. That Verulamium had fallen before 560 is shown by the lament over its ruin in Gildas (Hist. sec. 10); but its fall can hardly have been much earlier. The bounds of the diocese of London, which represent the kingdom of Essex, show that the Hertfordshire men were part of the East-Saxons. The present shire of Hertford, however, is far from coinciding in its limits with those of the East-Saxon realm or diocese.

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and the rich country along its estuary. And now the occupation of Hertfordshire cut off the city from northern and central Britain, for it was over these chalk uplands that the Watling Street struck across the central plain to Chester and the north-west, and it was through Verulamium that travellers bent round the forest-block above London on their way to the north. Only along the Thames itself could London maintain any communication with what remained of Britain; and even this communication must have been threatened as the invaders crept down the slopes from the north through the woodland which crowned the rises of Hampstead and Highgate, or descended by the valleys of the Brent and the Colne on the tract which retains their name of Middle-Sexe. The settlers in this district, indeed, seem to have been unimportant; and the walls of the great city were still strong enough to defy any direct attack. But when once the invading force had closed fairly round it, London like its fellow-towns must have yielded to the stress of a long blockade. Although no record remains of its capture or surrender,[1] the course of events seems to give the date of its fall pretty clearly. It was certainly in English hands by the opening of the seventh century;[2] and its fall is the one event which would account for a movement of the Kentish-

[1] "Good reasons may be given for the belief that even London itself for a while lay desolate and uninhabited."—Guest, "Conquest of Severn Valley," Archæol. Journ. xix. p. 217.

[2] In 604 it was in the hands of King Sæberct of Essex, "Orientalium Saxonum . . . quorum metropolis Lundonia civitas est," Bæda (H. E. ii. 3). And it passed into those of his sons (Ibid. ii. 5).

men which we find taking place, at the moment which we have reached, along the southern bank of the Thames.[1]

Since the death of Hengest the kingdom of Kent had played no direct part in the conquest of Britain. Jutes had indeed mastered the Isle of Wight, and Jutish houses had joined the Saxon war-bands in their winning of southern Britain; but the Jutish kingdom itself had rested quietly within its earlier limits between the Channel and the Thames. Under the great-grandson of Hengest however, Æthelberht, who was born in the year of the fall of Sorbiodunun, and who mounted its throne as a child a little later, it again came boldly to the front.[2] Narrow as were its bounds, indeed, Kent equalled in political power the wider realms which were forming about it. It remained, as of old, one of the wealthiest and most flourishing parts of Britain. The ruin of Hengest's wars had been in some part repaired by the peace which had existed since its conquest a hundred years ago; for while the Gwent and the Thames valley were still being wasted with fight and ravage, the Cant-wara were settling quietly down into busy husbandmen along its

Kent.

[1] The settlers in the district west of London are known afterwards as the Middle-Saxons. But that they were only an offshoot of the East-Saxons is clear from the fact that, with London, they always belonged to the kingdom of Essex, and that Middlesex still forms a part of the East-Saxon bishopric of London.

[2] The date of Æthelberht's birth is given in the English Chronicle, a. 552 (in the late Canterbury copy). Bæda says that at his death in 616 "regnum . . . quinquaginta et sex annis gloriosissime tenuerat" (H. E. ii. 5), which fixes his accession in 560. He was thus only eight years old when he became king, and sixteen when he fought at Wimbledon.

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coast, or on its downs, or in the fertile bottoms of the river-valleys that cleft them. It was a sign of this tranquillity that the district had even before Æthelberht's day resumed that intercourse with the Continent which the descent of the Jutes had for a while broken off; and that only a few years later we find men versed in the English tongue, the result of a commerce which must have again sprung to life, ready at hand in the ports of Gaul.[1]

Kent and London.

With wealth and strength drawn from a century of peace, as well as with the pride which it drew from the memory of its earlier share in the conquest of Britain, Kent hardly needed any other stimulus to nerve it to efforts for a wider sway. But when Æthelberht looked out from his petty realm with dreams of sharing in the general advance of his race, the boy-king found himself shut in on every side save one by English ground. To the south-west lay Sussex and the Andredsweald; to the north over Thames lay the land of the East-Saxons; and only directly to the west, between the north-downs and the Thames, did any tract of British country offer itself to his arms. In this quarter the Jutes had been baffled for a hundred years by the barriers in their way, by the wooded fastnesses of the Dulwich heights, the tangled swamp which stretched from these heights to the Thames, and the forces which would pour from London across its bridge to the suburb that occupied the site of the future Southwark. From the line of the Medway the West-Kentish warriors had crept forward

[1] Bæda, H. E. i. c. 25.

along the strip of shore between Blackheath and the Thames, past Woolwich and Greenwich, to the edge of this morass; but here the border-line of Kent marks the limit of their advance. Nothing but the fall of the great city could remove the hindrance from their path; and we can hardly err in believing that it was the capture of London by the East-Saxons which at last enabled the Jutes to force their way across the border, and to march in 568 on the tract to the west.[1]

West-Saxons and Silchester.

But Æthelberht had hardly struggled through the marshes and entered on this long-coveted district than his progress was again roughly barred. He found himself face to face, not with a British, but with an English foe; for the conquests of the West-Saxons had brought them, as we have seen, to the western extremity of the very tract on which Æthelberht was advancing from the east. Their overrunning of Berkshire and the Marlborough Downs had carried them to the border of the Thames valley, and the course of the great river led them forward to the country along its banks. Only one obstacle lay in their path. Of the ring of fortresses that enclosed the Gwent, Calleva Atrebatum, the modern Silchester, which stood on the edge of the upland where the roads from Winchester and Old Sarum united on their way to London, alone remained in British hands. Silchester[2] presented a marked contrast to the towns which the Gewissas had as yet attacked. The

[1] Eng. Chron. a. 568.

[2] For Silchester, see paper by Mr. Joyce, Archæol. Journal, vol. xxx. p. 10.

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fortresses of the Saxon Shore had been built simply as fortresses, and their small walled citadels stood apart from the general mass of habitations near them. In towns such as York, on the other hand, we see the first military settlement of the Roman conquest rising within the earlier walls, but at last so utterly

outgrowing them that the bulk of the town lay in undefended suburbs, and the walled city contained little more than the quarters of troops and officials. Silchester belongs to neither of these classes. Originally the seat of a British tribe, its position in the heart of the island had deprived it of any military importance during the earlier ages of the Roman

occupation, while it sheltered the town from the border-forays that alone broke the Roman peace. It was not till the decay of the Empire brought trouble at last to its gates that inland towns such as Calleva were compelled to seek shelter in a ring of walls; and within these walls the whole town was naturally enclosed. It is this cause which accounts for the disproportion between the walled area of one town and another in Roman Britain, between the few acres enclosed by the walls of York and the space enclosed by the walls of Silchester or London. The circuit of the walls of Silchester is about three miles round; and their irregular and polygonal form, if we compare it with the regular quadrangle of Richborough or Lincoln, shows that Calleva was a fortified city, and not a city which had grown up within or around a fortress. Mutilated and broken down as it is, the wall with the wide ditch that still partially encircles it enables us to realize the military strength of the town. In the midst of its network of narrow streets lay a central Forum, round which stood the public offices and principal shops of the place, while one side was wholly occupied by a huge basilica, or justice hall, whose central nave was sustained by two rows of stately Corinthian pillars, and closed at each end by a lordly apse. Remains such as these show that the Roman tradition was still strong among the citizens of Calleva, and it may have been with the Roman eagle at their head, and in the Roman order, that its men marched against the West-Saxons. But all was in vain. We know nothing of the rout of the

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burghers, or of the siege and ruin of their town. It is only the discovery of a legionary eagle, hidden away as it would seem in some secret recess, and there buried for ages beneath the charred wreck of one of its houses, that tells its own pathetic tale of the fall of Silchester.[1]

Battle of Wimbledon.

The fall of this city opened to the West-Saxons the road to the west. By its capture they had in fact turned the flank of the Andredsweald. The impenetrable tract whose scrub and forest and clay bottoms had so long held the assailants of Southern Britain at bay lay between the two lines of chalk uplands, the South Downs and the North Downs, which diverged from the Gwent on which the West-Saxons had stood so long. But the capture of Calleva brought them fairly round the extremity of the Andredsweald, and opened for them the tract that lay between the North Downs and the Thames. From Silchester a road led through the heart of this tract to the south of the Bearrocwood, which filled the bend of the river about Windsor, traversed the wild heaths of Bagshot, then as for ages later a lonely stretch of heather and sand, and dipping into the marshes that still leave their trace on the scenery about Weybridge, pushed through the thick woodlands which hid the gentle windings of the lower Mole[2] till it reached the little town which occupied the site of our Kingston.[3] Here the road

[1] Joyce, Silchester, Archæol. Journal, xxx. p. 25.

[2] The local names show how thickly this district was wooded.

[3] Numerous remains have been found, which prove that a Roman station existed at Kingston.

crossed the Thames by a ferry, to strike along its northern bank towards London; and that the West-Saxons made no attempt to follow its course across the river adds force to the supposition that the city and the district about it were already in English hands.[1] But even in the country between the Thames and the Downs their way was barred by an English rival. Right in their path as they lay at Kingston stretched the low rise of a broad, open heath, which extended from the river's brink at Putney[2] to the height or "dun" which was to be known from some later settler as Wibba's dun, or Wimbledon. The heath was studded with barrows that marked it as the scene of earlier conflicts; and an older entrenchment which covered seven acres of its surface may have been occupied by the forces under Æthelberht. But a century of peace had left the Jutes no match for veterans who were fresh from the long strife about the Gwent. The encounter of 568 was memorable as the first fight of Englishmen with Englishmen on British soil;[3] but the day went against the young Kentish King; his army was thrown back across the Wandle on its own border, and the disputed district, the Surrey of after days, became from that moment a land of the West-Saxons.

[1] That they had no objection to crossing the river in itself is clear from the fact that they crossed it but a few years later into the territory of the Four Towns. This was British soil: and had our Middlesex been British soil, they would as naturally have crossed at Kingston.

[2] The older form of this name, Putten-heath, tells its own tale.

[3] Engl. Chron. a. 568.

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Only one portion of the Thames valley now remained in British hands, the tract along its northern bank from the Chilterns to the Cotswolds; and it was into the heart of this district that the West-Saxons penetrated as soon as they had mastered Surrey. Close over against their settlements in Berkshire lay a region which was subject to four British towns, now known to us only by their later names of Eynsham, Bensington, Aylesbury, and Lenborough, the last of these a small hamlet near the present Buckingham.[1] The district comprised in fact the valleys of the Thame and the Cherwell, as well as of a few streams yet further to the westward, such as the Woodrush, the Evenlode, and the Lech; while to northwards it stretched across the bounds of the Thames-basin into the basin of the Wash, and reached in a narrow strip to the Ouse. It lay within a natural framework of river and woodland that marked it off from the rest of Britain. On the eastern side ran the escarpment of the Chilterns, whose chalk downs were covered with scrub and brushwood as well as broken with deep bottoms, which made them for hundreds of years to come almost impenetrable to an army, and which effectually sheltered this tract from any aggression on the part of the Middle-Saxons. To the west, between the district of the Four Towns and the slopes of the Cotswolds, ran a line of woodlands and marshes that have left their traces in Wychwood and Canbury Forest, and in the tangled and difficult channels of the streams which drain them. These lines of defence drew together to the northward,

The Four Towns.

[1] Engl. Chron. a. 571.

and were linked by the woodlands about Towcester and the marshy meadows of the Ouse, while along the southern border of the district ran the Thames, then a deeper and more rapid river than now, guarded from near the site of the present Oxford to that of Abingdon by almost impenetrable woods, and along the bend from Goring to Henley by the fastness of the Chiltern Hills.

Their Districts.

As one looks westward from the Chilterns nowadays over Aylesbury Vale, the district of the Four Towns stretches away in undulating reaches of green meadowland, dotted with hamlets and homesteads that nestle beneath copses and tree clumps, the clay bottom of some primæval sea out of which low lifts of oolite rise at Aylesbury and Brill. Then as now the country was fertile and well peopled. The river Thame, which flows through the heart of it, gathers its waters from the Chiltern slopes, and running westward till it passes the little town to which it gives its name, turns from that point abruptly to the south by Chalgrove Field to the Thames. On the upper waters of the stream lay a town which is represented by our Aylesbury, crowning with the church, or Eglwys,[1] to which it possibly owed its English name, a low rise of oolite that commanded the district from the base of the Chilterns as far as the town of Thame. A line running close beside Thame marks the present shire line between Buckingham and Oxfordshire, as it may then have marked the boundary between the territory that owned the rule

[1] Another derivation is from Ægil, the sun-archer of Teutonic mythology.

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of Aylesbury and that which owned the rule of Bensington. The district of this last town would thus comprise the lower valley of the Thame, with the country along the Thames, into which it falls, from the edge of the Chilterns to its bend northward toward Oxford, and would cover much the same ground as the south-eastern portion of the present Oxfordshire. The western portion of the same county seems to be co-extensive with the district of Eynsham, the country of the Cherwell valley from Banbury to Oxford, a district bounded westward by the woods and marshes of the present Gloucestershire border, parted from that of Bensington perhaps by the rise of Shotover, and touching the districts of Aylesbury and Buckingham to the east in an irregular line, of which Brill may have been an outpost. The district of Lenborough or Buckingham, which lay along the Ouse to the north of its three confederates, possibly reached eastward as far as the quiet meadows of Cowper's Olney and the limits of Bedford, and was bounded in other directions by the territories of Towcester and Aylesbury.[1]

[1] I have been guided in tracing these boundaries by the lie of the ground itself, and what we know of its natural features at this time, as well as by the limits of the actual shires. But a more careful examination of the local "dykes," &c., is needed before one can arrive at more than probable conclusions on the subject. It is needful too to bear in mind that the shires of this district probably owe their actual form to administrative arrangements of the tenth century; and that though they may have preserved the boundaries of older tribal divisions, they do not everywhere exactly coincide with them. Thus, part of the present Hertfordshire, as the diocesan limits show, belonged originally to the district of the Four Towns, and remained West-Saxon

It was from the south that the West-Saxons struck this country of the Four Towns. The conquests of Cynric had planted them, as we have seen, on the Ilsley and Marlborough Downs, in other words, on the westernmost portion of the chalk-range that, starting from the Gwent of Hampshire, runs by these downs and the Chilterns to the uplands of East Anglia. Along the base of the slopes in which this range fronts the lower country to the north ran one of the earliest lines of British communication. Its name of the Icknield Way connects this road with the Iceni, whom the Romans found settled in our Norfolk and Suffolk, and points back to days in which this tribe stood supreme in south-eastern Britain, and when the road served as their line of traffic and of military communication with the Gwent of Hampshire and the mining district of Cornwall.[1] Seldom climbing to the crest of the down, and equally avoiding the deep bottoms beneath the slopes of the escarpment, its course recalls a time when the wayfarer shrank equally from the dangers of the open country and from the thickets and marshes which made the lower grounds all but impassable. The road long remained one of the main thoroughfares of the island; pilgrims from the west traversed it throughout the middle ages on their way to the shrine of St. Edmund at Bury; and but two centuries ago lines of pack-horses

The Icknield Way

till the establishment of the Danelagh. Bedfordshire, again, is made up of more than the district of the "Bedecanford" of Cuthwulf's day.

[1] For the Icknield Way, see Guest, "Four Roman Ways," Archæol. Journ. xiv. 109.

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carried along it bales of woollen goods from the manufacturing towns of the eastern counties.

Battle of Bedford.

It was along the Icknield Way, therefore, that the West-Saxons would naturally have pushed into the heart of the island. But their advance had been brought to a standstill by a sudden gap in the line of heights, the gap through which the Thames, turning abruptly to the south, cuts its way through the downs to its lower valley and the sea. It was this obstacle of the great river which had bent them to their march along its southern bank and their conquest of Surrey. But Surrey once won, their advance along the line of the chalk-downs was resumed; and the barrier of the river was forced at a spot whose name preserves for us the memory of the invaders. Just before the Thames enters the gap beneath the Chilterns, the Icknield Way crossed it by a ford, which was recognised for a thousand years as the main pass across the river. Here probably the Romans first crossed into Mid-Britain, and it was by the same point that the Norman conqueror made his way after Hastings into the heart of the island. With the single exception indeed of Halliford, near the Conway Stakes, this was the lowest point in its course in which the Thames under its then tidal conditions could be forded at all.[1] It was by this ford, the Wallingford or Ford of the Wealhas[2] or Welsh-men,

[1] Guest, "Campaign of Aulus Plautius," Archæol. Journal, xxiii. pp. 163, 165, 175.

[2] It was by this name, which means "strangers," or "unintelligible people," that the English knew the Britons; and it is the name by which the Britons, oddly enough, now know themselves.

as the conquerors called it, that the West-Saxe must have passed the river in 571.[1] Their leader was Cuthwulf, another son of Cynric, a brother of Ceawlin and Cutha, eager, it may be, to rival the achievements of his father and brother in war. Of the events of this campaign, however, we know but one, the battle with which it closed. From the spot at which it was fought it seems as if Cuthwulf's raid had carried him from Wallingford by the Icknield Way along the western slope of the Chilterns as far as Bedford before the forces of the Four Towns could gather at the news of the foray, intercept him as he fell back from the valley of the Ouse, and force him to an engagement.[2] But whatever were the circumstances which brought about the battle, victory fell as of old to the freebooters, and the success of Cuthwulf's men was followed by the ruin of the Four Towns of the league.

Halt of West-Saxons.

The last raid of the West-Saxons had brought them to the verge of Mid-Britain. That they paused at this point in their advance to the north, and that the upper Ouse at Bedford remained the boundary of their conquests in this quarter, may probably be explained, like their previous turning away from London, by the fact that the country which they had reached was already in the hands of Englishmen. No written record indeed fixes the dates of the winning of central Britain; but the halt of Cuthwulf is a significant one.

[1] "The name of the earlier conquerors still lives in the neighbouring Englefield."—Freeman, "Norman Conquest," iii. p. 542.

[2] E. Chron. 571; Guest, E. E. Sett. p. 71.

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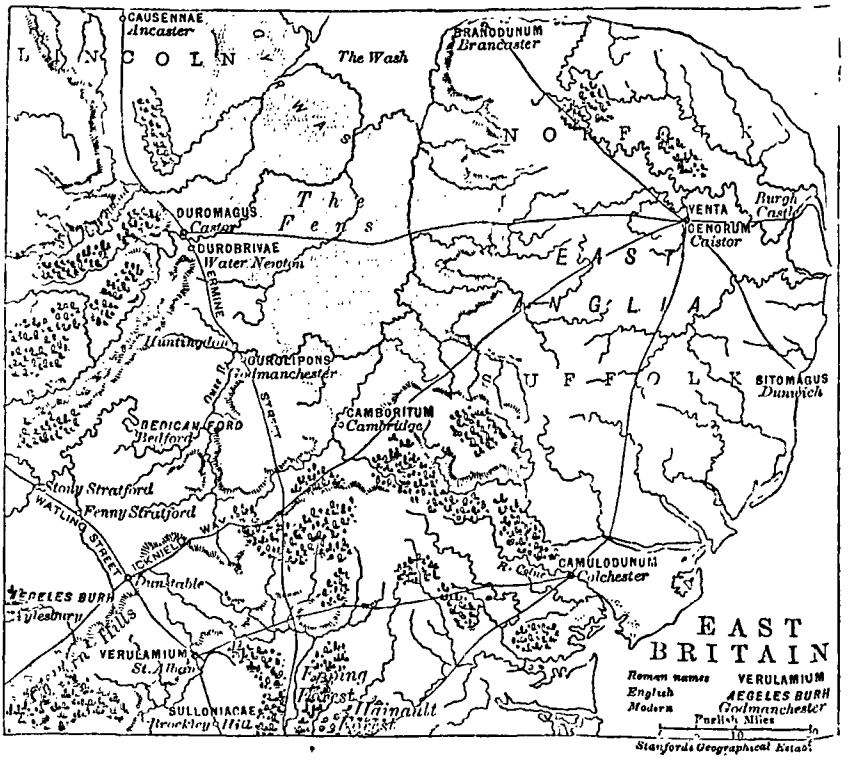
In the years that followed the victory of 571 the West-Saxons must have spread over the country they had won, over an area which roughly corresponds to that of the shires of Oxford, Bedford, and Bucks. To the eastward, therefore, their settlements were pushed along the clay-flats of the upper Ouse, along



the valley which lies between the chalk-ranges of the Chilterns and the oolitic upland of our Northamptonshire. On the Chilterns, as we know, the East-Saxons had for some while been settled about Hertford; but that the West-Sexe made no effort to push further to the east can only be explained by the

presence of other Englishmen in that quarter. No natural obstacles arrested their march along the Ouse; neither forest nor hill forced them to halt at the point in its course which is marked by the little town of St. Neots, or to draw their border line from it along such lines as the little stream of the Kym.[1] We can only account for such a halt by supposing that, across this border line on the course of the lower Ouse, the ground which now forms our Huntingdonshire had been occupied before 571 by the Engle folk whom we find in later days settled there.

Attack on Severn Valley.

That the Engle were at the same time masters of the upland which stretched like a bar across Cuthwulf's road to the north is less certain; for in this quarter, as we have seen, the dense screen of forests along the southern slopes of Northamptonshire might of themselves have held the West-Saxons at bay. But the conquest of the Trent valley must now have been going on; and the presence of Englishmen on the northern upland is the best explanation of the sudden wheel which the West-Saxons now made to the west. Directly westward, indeed, they were still not as yet to press; for the woods of Dorsetshire baffled them, and those of the Frome valley long proved a protection to the Britons of Somerset. Nor, for reasons we are less able to discover, did they push up the oolitic slopes from our Oxfordshire to the brow of the Cotswolds, where the town of Corinium

[1] I do not rely wholly on the fact of the present shire line; for here language serves as a more definite boundary. Bedfordshire men still speak a Saxon, Huntingdon and Northamptonshire-folk speak an Engle, dialect.

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challenged their arms. It may have been that the tangled streams, the woodlands, and the pass over the Thames at Lechlade, which protected this district, were still held too strongly by the forces of the city. But on their north-western border, in the interval

between these lines of attack, lay a third line which was guarded by no such barriers, the line of the lower Severn valley, and it was on this tract that the West-

Sexe poured from the Wiltshire downs in 577.[1] The country was richer than any they had as yet traversed. Nowhere do the remains of both private and public buildings show greater wealth and refinement than at Corinium, the chief town of the Cotswolds, which stood on the site of our Cirencester, and which was surpassed in wealth and importance among its fellow towns only by York, London, and Colchester.[2] Below the Cotswolds, in the valley of the Severn, Glevum, the predecessor of our Gloucester, though smaller in size, was equally important from its position at the head of the estuary, and from its neighbourhood to the iron works of the Forest of Dean. Less than these in extent, but conspicuous from the grandeur of its public buildings, Bath was then, as in later times, the fashionable resort of the gouty provincial. Its hot springs were covered by a colonnade which lasted down to almost recent times; and its local deity, Sul, may still have found worshippers in the lordly temple whose fragments are found among its ruins.[3] The territory of the three towns shows their power, for it comprised the whole district of the Cotswold and the lower Severn, with a large part of

[1] As to this inroad I follow in the main Dr. Guest's paper, "On the English Conquest of the Severn Valley," Archæol. Journ. xix. 195.

[2] Guest, "Conquest of Severn Valley," Archæol. Journ. xix. p. 195. For Corinium, see paper by Mr. Tucker, Archæol. Journ. vi. 321. The modern Cirencester "does not occupy more than one-third of the area of the Roman city."

[3] The Roman remains at Bath have been described by Mr. Scarth in numerous papers, some of which may be found in the Proceedings of the Somerset Archæological Society.

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what is now northern Somersetshire. It stretched therefore from Mendip on the south as far northwards as the forest which then covered almost the whole of Worcestershire. This fertile district was thickly set with the country houses and estates of the wealthier provincials. On either side of a road that runs through the heart of it, from Cirencester to Aust-passage over the Severn, as well as along the roads which linked the three cities together, these mansions stood thickly; and that of Woodchester is perhaps the largest and most magnificent whose remains have as yet been found in Britain.[1] Two courts, round which ran the farm buildings and domestic buildings of the house, covered an area five hundred feet deep and three hundred broad. Every colonnade and passage had its tesselated pavement; marble statues stood out from the gaily painted walls; while pictures of Orpheus and Pan gleamed from amid the fanciful scrollwork and fretwork of its mosaic floors.

Battle of Deorham.

It was from houses such as these, and from the three cities to which they clung, that the army gathered which met the West-Saxons under Ceawlin as they pushed over the Cotswolds into the valley of the Severn. But the old municipal independence seems to have been passing away. The record of the battle in the chronicle of the conquerors connects the three cities with three kings; and from the Celtic names of these kings, Conmael, Condidan or Kyndylan, and Farinmael, we may infer that the Roman town party, which had once been strong enough to raise Aurelius to the throne of Britain, was now

[1] Wright, "Celt, Roman, and Saxon," pp. 229-240.

driven to bow to the supremacy of native chieftains.[1] It was the forces of these kings that met Ceawlin at Deorham, a village which lies northward of Bath on a chain of hills overlooking the Severn valley, and whose defeat threw open the country of the three towns to the West-Saxon arms. Through the three years that followed the invaders must have been spreading over the district which this victory made their own. Westward, if Welsh legend is to be trusted, their forays reached across the Severn as far as the Wye.[2] To the south they seem to have pushed across the Avon past the site of the future Bristol, and over the limestone mass of Mendip, whence they drove off in flight the lead-miners who have left their cinder-heaps along its crest, till they were checked in their progress by the marshes of Glastonbury.[3] In the south-west they were unable to dislodge the Britons from the forest of Braden, the woodland that filled the Frome valley; and this wedge of unconquered ground ran up for the next hundred years into the heart of their territory. But in the rich tract along the lower Severn which the site of their victory overlooked their settlements lay thick. Here, in the present Gloucestershire and Worcestershire, the settlers bore the name of the Hwiccas,[4] a name which

[1] E. Chron. a. 577. Guest, "Conquest of Severn Valley," Archæol. Journ. xix. p. 194.

[2] Guest, "Conq. of Severn Valley," Archæol. Journ. xix. p. 195.

[3] Guest, "Welsh and Engl. in Somerset," Archæol. Journ. xvi. pp. 109-117.

[4] Theodore set the "bishop of the Hwiccas" at Worcester; and his diocese included both the counties of Worcester and Gloucester as well as the adjacent districts. This seems to

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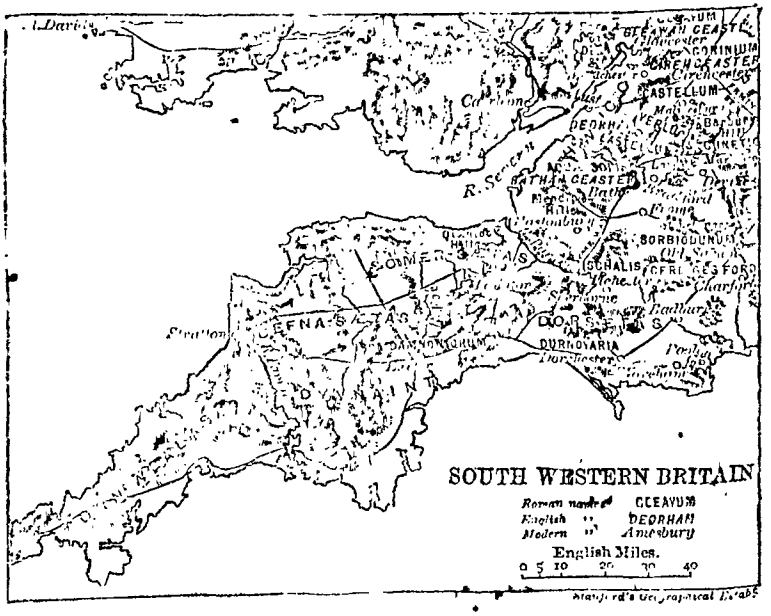
took a yet wider range as from the valley of the Severn the invaders spread over the upland of the Cotswolds to settle round the fallen Corinium, and found homes along the southern skirts of the forest of Arden.

prove that "Hwiccan" was the older name for the settlers along the whole of the lower Severn, the Cotswolds above it, and southern Warwickshire; and Florence (a. 897) places Cirencester "in meridionali parte Wicciorum"—which would confirm this. Earle, "Local Names of Gloucestershire" [Archæol. Journ. xix. pp. 51, 52], connects the name with our Wychwood, spelt in 841 "Hwicce-wudu," and which, though in Oxfordshire, is within a short distance of Gloucestershire, and marks the watershed between Severn and Thames. He seems, however, to limit the Hwiccas to Gloucestershire: and to give Worcestershire to the Magesætas, whom Mr. Freeman places in Herefordshire and Shropshire [Norm. Conquest, i. p. 561].



CHAPTER IV.

THE SETTLEMENT OF THE CONQUERORS.

The Age of Settlement.

WITH the battle of Deorham and the winning of the lower Severn valley we enter on a new age of our history. The conquest indeed was far from being complete, for when Ceawlin paused in his career of victory half the island still remained unconquered, and the border line of the invaders ran roughly along the rise that parts the waters of Britain, from Ettrick across Cheviot, along the Yorkshire moors to the Peak of Derbyshire, thence by the skirts of Arden to the mouth of Severn, and across the estuary of that river, by Mendip, through the woods of Dorset to the sea. But the country within this line comprised all that was really worth winning, for the wild land to westward and northward had little to tempt an invader. Though the tide of invasion therefore still crept on, it crept on slowly and uncertainly; and from this time the energies of the conquerors were mainly absorbed, not in winning fresh land, but in settling in the land they had won. We pass, then, from an age of Conquest to an age of Settlement. But dim as was the light that guided us through much of our earlier story, it is bright beside the darkness that

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wraps the first upgrowth of English life on British soil. No written record tells us how Saxon or Engle dealt with the land they had made their own, how they drove out its older inhabitants, or how they shared it among the new, how the settlers settled down in township or thorpe, or how they moulded into shape, under changed conditions, the life they had brought with them from German shores. Even legend and tradition are silent as to their settlement. It is only by help of the few traces of this older life which remains embedded in custom, or in law, or in later verse, that we can sketch its outlines, and such a sketch must necessarily be dim and incomplete.

Weakness of English attack.

The character of the settlement was in great measure determined by that of the conquest itself; as that of the conquest was determined by the main characteristics which distinguished the winning of Britain from the winning of the other western provinces of the Empire. The first of these was the comparative weakness of the attack. Nowhere had the barbaric force been so small or its onset so fitful. Difficulties of transport made attack by sea less easy than attack by land; and the warriors who were brought across the Channel or the German Ocean by the boats of Hengest and Cerdic must have been few beside the hosts who followed Alboin or Chlodowig over the Alps or the Rhine. The story of the conquest confirms the English tradition that the invaders of Britain landed in small parties, and that they were only gradually reinforced by after-comers. Nor was there any joint action among the

assailants to compensate for the smallness of their numbers.[1] Though all spoke the same language and used the same laws, they had no such bond of political union as the Franks; and though all were bent on winning the same land, each band and each leader preferred their own separate course of action to any collective enterprise.

Stubbornness of the defence.

A second, and yet more momentous characteristic, was the stubbornness of the defence. It is this indeed which above all distinguished the conquest of Britain from that of other provinces of Rome. In all the world-wide struggles between Rome and the Germanic races, no land was so stubbornly fought for or so hardly won. In Gaul the Frank or the Visigoth met little native resistance save from the peasants of Britanny or Auvergne. No popular revolt broke out against the rule of Odoacer or Theodoric in Italy. But in Britain the invader was met by a courage and tenacity almost equal to his own. So far as we can follow the meagre record of the conquerors, or track their advance by the dykes and ruins it left behind it, every inch of ground seems to have been fought for. Field by field, town by town, forest by forest, the land was won; and as each bit of ground was torn away from its defenders the beaten men sullenly drew back from it to fight as stubbornly for the next.

Nature of the country.

But there was yet a third characteristic of the conquest which told on the after settlement, and this was the way in which the struggle was influenced by the nature of the conquered country itself. It is

[1] Stubbs, Constit. Hist., i. 67.

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impossible to follow the story of its winning without being struck by the natural obstacles which the province presented to an invader. Elsewhere in the Roman world the work of the conqueror was aided by the very civilization of Rome. Vandal and Goth marched along Roman highways, over ground cleared by the Roman axe, as they crossed river or ravine on the Roman bridge. To a great extent it was so in Britain. But though Britain had been Romanized, she had been less Romanized than any province of the West; and the material civilization of the island was yet more backward than its social civilization. The mere forest-belts which remained over vast stretches of country formed mighty barriers, barriers which were everywhere strong enough to check the advance of an invader, and sometimes strong enough to arrest it. The Jutes and the South-Saxons were brought wholly to a standstill by the Andredsweald. The East-Saxons never pierced the woods of their western border. The Fens proved impassable to the East-Angles. It was only after a long and terrible struggle that the West-Saxons could hew their way through the forests that girt in the Gwent of the southern coast, and in the height of their power they were thrown back from the forests of Cheshire.

The Britons driven off.

Under such conditions the overrunning of Britain could not fail to be a very different matter from the rapid and easy overrunning of such countries as Gaul. Instead of quartering themselves quietly, like their fellows abroad, on subjects who were glad to buy peace by obedience and tribute, Engle and Saxon had to make every inch of Britain their own by hard fighting.

Instead of mastering the country in a few great battles, they had to tear it bit by bit from its defenders in a weary and endless strife. How slow the work of English conquest was may be seen from the fact that it took nearly thirty years to win Kent alone, and sixty to complete the conquest of Southern Britain, while the conquest of the bulk of the island was only wrought out after two centuries of bitter warfare. But it was just through the length of the struggle that, of all the German conquests, this was the most thorough and complete. That of France by the Franks, or that of Italy by the Lombards, proved little more than a forcible settlement of the one or the other among tributary subjects who were destined in a long course of ages to absorb their conquerors. French is the tongue, not of the Frank, but of the Gaul whom he overcame; and the fair hair of the Lombard is all but unknown in Lombardy. But almost to the close of the sixth century the English conquest of Britain was a sheer dispossession of the conquered people; and, so far as the English sword in these earlier days reached, Britain became England,[1] a land, that is, not of Britons, but of Englishmen.

Not slaughtered.

There is no need to believe that the clearing of the land meant the general slaughter of the men who held it, or to account for such a slaughter by supposed differences between the temper of the English and those of other conquerors. Fierce and cruel as they may have been, the picture which Gregory of Tours gives us of the Franks hinders us from believing that

[1] I use the word only by anticipation. The name "England" itself is not found before the days of Eadgar and Dunstan.

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Englishmen were more fierce or cruel than other Germans who attacked the Empire. Nor is there more ground for the assertion[1] that they were utterly strange to the Roman civilization; indeed the mere presence of Saxon vessels in the Channel for a hundred years before their descent upon Britain must have familiarized its invaders with what civilization was to be found in the provinces of the West. It was not the temper of the conquerors that gave its character to the conquest of Britain so much as the temper of the conquered. The displacement of the conquered people was only made possible by their own stubborn resistance, and by the slow progress of the conquerors in the teeth of it. Slaughter no doubt there was on the battle-field or in towns like Anderida, whose long defence woke wrath in their besiegers. But for the most part the Britons cannot have been slaughtered; they were simply defeated and drew back.

Proofs of the withdrawal of the Britons.

The proofs of such a displacement lie less in isolated passages from chronicle or history than in the broad features of the conquest itself.[2] When Hengest landed in Thanet he found Britain inhabited by a people of Celtic and Roman blood, a people governed by Celtic or Roman laws, speaking the Welsh or Latin tongue, still sharing to a great extent the civilization and manners of the Empire from which they had parted, and at least outwardly conforming to the Christian faith which that Empire professed. The outer aspect of the land remained that of a Roman

[1] Freeman, "Norman Conquest," vol. i. p. 20.

[2] Stubbs, Constit. Hist. i. 70.

province; it was guarded by border fortresses; it was studded with peopled cities; it was tilled by great landowners whose villas rose proudly over the huts of their serfs. But when Ceawlin turned from the battle-field of Deorham, the face of the Britain that lay behind him was utterly changed. So far as the English or Saxon sword had reached, to the eastward, that is, of the line which we have drawn through Central Britain, the country showed no sign of British or Roman life at all. The tradition both of conquerors and of conquered tells us that an utter change had taken place in the men that dwelt in it. They knew themselves only as Englishmen, and in the history or law of these English inhabitants we find as yet not a trace of the existence of a single Briton among them.[1] The only people that English chronicle or code knows of as living on the conquered soil are Englishmen. Nor does the British tradition know of any other. Had Britons formed part of the population in the land which had been reft away by the invader's sword, they must have been known to their fellow Britons beyond the English border. But in the one record of such a Britain that remains to us, the history of Gildas, there is no hint of their existence.[2] To him, as to his fellow-countrymen, the land

[1] From the close of the sixth century, when the conquest took wider bounds and a new character, we find a different state of things in the newly annexed districts. Here I am speaking strictly of the earlier age of conquest and of the portion of Britain which it covered.

[2] There is, indeed, a single phrase (Hist. c. 25, "alii fame confecti accedentes, manus hostibus dabant in ævum servituri"), which speaks of the surrender of Britons to their conquerors,

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of the Englishmen is a foreign land and its people a foreign people.

Evidence of names

The contemporary tradition, then, is everywhere the same; and it is confirmed by every fact which meets us in the path of our story. Had the older inhabitants remained as serfs or as a dependent people among their conquerors, as the older inhabitants of Gaul remained among the Franks, or those of Italy among the Lombards, we should find a state of things in some degree like to that of Italy or Gaul. We should find at any rate some traces of the provincials in the history of the joint population, some traces of their cities and their country-houses, some of their names mingling with those of the newcomers, some remains of their language, their religion, their manners, and their law. But in conquered Britain we find not a trace of these things. The designations of the local features of the country indeed, the names of hill and vale and river, often remain purely Celtic. There are "pens" and "duns" among our uplands, "combes" in our valleys, "exes" and "ocks" among our running waters. But when we look at the traces of human life itself, at the names of the villages and hamlets that lie scattered over the country side, we find them purely English. The "vill" and the "city" have vanished, and in their stead appear the "tun" and "ham" and "thorpe" of the new settlers. If we turn from the names of these villages to those of the men who live

but such captives would at such a time be sold into slavery, and the mention of them only makes the silence of Gildas elsewhere the more significant.

in them the contrast becomes even stronger. So far as existing documents tell us anything, they tell us that Roman and Welshman wholly vanished from the land. When Gregory of Tours writes the story of Gaul after its conquest by the Franks, we meet in the course of his narrative with as many Roman names as Frank. But in the parallel history of Britain after its conquest by the English which we owe to Bæda, we meet with no British or Roman names at all. He gives us indeed the names of Britons in districts which still remained free from English rule; but amidst the hundreds of men and women whom he records as living and acting in the new England, there is not one whose name is not almost certainly English.[1]

Evidence of language.

It is the same with language. Latin, which had been the official tongue of the province, the language of its soldiers and civil administrators, and probably that of its citizens, withdrew before the invader to the south-west and the west. When it again appeared in eastern Britain, it came as a foreign tongue brought in by foreign missionaries, and needing interpreters to explain it to the men it found there.[2] The British tongue, the tongue, that is, of the mass of the population even under Roman rule, though it lived on as the tongue of the Britons themselves in the land to which they withdrew, has left hardly a trace of its existence in the language which

[1] I do not know of any that have even been claimed as British save Coifi and the West-Saxon Ceadwalla.

[2] Bæda, H. E. lib. i. c. 23, 25. Bæda, Vit. Abbatum, ed. Stevenson, p. 141.

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has taken its place over the conquered area.[1] There is the same utter change in government, in society, in law. The Roman law simply disappeared;[2] and no trace of the body of Celtic customs which form the Welsh law can be detected in the purely Teutonic institutes which formed the law of the English settlers. The political institutions that we find established in the conquered land, as well as the social usages of the conquering people are utterly different from those of the Roman or the Celt; not only are they those which are common to the German race, but they are the most purely German institutions that any branch of the German race has preserved.[3]

[1] The Celtic words in our earlier English were first collected by Mr. Garnett in his "Philological Essays." They are few, and mostly words of domestic use, such as *basket*, which may well have crept in from the female slaves who must here and there have been seized by the invaders. It must be remembered, too, that we have no means of ascertaining *when* such words became English; and that after the change in the character of the conquest, that is from the seventh century, Welsh words like Welsh names would naturally filter in from the mixed population of western and south-western Britain.

[2] Stubbs, Constit. Hist. vol. i. p. 11.

[3] Stubbs, Constit. Hist. vol. i. p. 6. "If its history is not the perfectly pure developement of Germanic principles, it is the nearest existing approach to such a development." . . . Again, at p. 11, "The polity developed by the German races on British soil is the purest product of their primitive instinct . . . The institutions of the Saxons of Germany long after the conquest of Britain were the most perfect exponent of the system which Tacitus saw, and described in the Germania; and the polity of their kinsmen in England, though it may not be older in its monuments than the Lex Salica, is more entirely free from Roman influences. In England the common germs were developed and ripened with the smallest intermixture of foreign

Evidence of towns.

Had any fragment of the older provincial life survived, the analogy of other provinces shows that it would have been that municipal organization which elsewhere handed down the tradition of the Empire. In the Roman world political and social life had been concentrated in its towns; and we have seen how great a part they played in the times which followed the withdrawal of the Roman rule. But with the English conquest the towns disappear. Though the Englishmen like other Germans shrank from dwelling within city walls, a native population, had it survived here as it survived elsewhere, would have remained, subject indeed but unchanged, in its older homes. But as the conquest passed over them, the towns of Roman Britain sank into mere ruins. Some never rose from their ruins. Anderida remained a wreck of uninhabited stones in the twelfth century,[1] and its square of walls remains lonely and uninhabited still. Silchester and Uriconium, large as they were, have only been brought to light again by modern research. The very sites of many still remain undiscovered. Such a permanent extinction however was seldom possible, for the local advantages which had drawn population to hill or river-ford in Celtic or Roman times began again to tell as the new England itself

elements. Not only were all the successive invasions of Britain which from the eighth to the eleventh century diversify the history of the island conducted by nations of common extraction, but, with the exception of ecclesiastical influence, no foreign interference that was not German in origin was admitted at all. Language, law, customs, and religion, preserve their original conformation and colouring."

[1] Huntingdon, Hist. Angl. (ed. Arnold), p. 45.

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grew populous and industrial; and the sites of these older cities became necessarily the sites of the new. But their repeopling was only after centuries of desolation and neglect. We have no ground for believing that Winchester had risen on the site of the Belgic Gwenta before the middle of the seventh century.[1] Cambridge was still a heap of ruins in the eighth century,[2] though it had risen to fresh life in the tenth. The great military station of Deva was still the "waste Chester" that Æthelfrith left it, when Æthelflæd four hundred years after made it her Chester on the Dee.[3] And even when life returned to them, it was long before the new towns could again cover the whole area of their ruined predecessors. It was not till Cnut's time that York could cover the area of Eburacum. It was not till after Dunstan's day that Canterbury grew big enough to fill again the walls of Durovernum. It was not till the very eve of the conquest that London itself stretched its dwellings over the space which lay within the walls of Londinium.[4] The new towns, too, grew up as new towns. Of the life or municipal government of their Roman predecessors they knew nothing. They inherited no curials or decurions. Their municipal constitution,

[1] The local traditions place the hallowing of the new church there in 648. See Rudborne, Hist. Major, and Annales Ecc. Wint. (Anglia Sacra, i. 189, 288).

[2] Bæda, H. E. lib. iv. c. 19.

[3] Flor. Worc. (ed. Thorpe), "Civitatem Legionum, tunc temporis desertam." Eng. Chron. a. 894. "Anre wæstre castre."

[4] At all these three towns the parishes furthest from the new starting-point within the walls are, as the dedications of their churches show, of these dates.

like their social organization, was of a purely English type.[1]

Evidence of religion.

The faith of Britain perished as utterly. Nothing brings home to us so vividly the change which had passed over the conquered country as the entire disappearance of its older religion. Had the conquest of Britain been in any way like the conquest of Italy or of Gaul, its religious issue could hardly have been other than theirs. Had the Britons been left existing on the soil as a subject population, paying tribute to or tilling the lands of foreign lords, the change of faith would most probably have been a change in the religion of the conquerors, and not of the conquered. To judge from the stubbornness with which the Romanized peoples rejected heathendom, and from the facility with which the Teutonic races elsewhere yielded to the spell of Christianity, it was not the Britons who would have become worshippers of Woden, but Engle and Saxon who would have become worshippers of Christ. But even if we suppose the invaders to have retained their old religion, the religious aspect of the land as a whole would have been little altered. In no instance did the Teutonic conquerors wage a religious war on the faiths of the conquered people. To barbarous races, indeed, who look on religion as simply a part of the national life, proselytism or persecution is impossible. The heathendom of the invaders would have been confined to their own settlements, and the whole British population would have remained Christian as before. Its churches, its priesthood, its ecclesiastical organization, its dioceses

[1] Stubbs, Constit. Hist., vol. i. p. 105 and note.

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and provinces, its connection with the rest of the Western Church, would have gone on without material change.

But what we find is the very reverse of this. In the conquered part of Britain Christianity wholly disappeared. The Church, and the whole organization of the Church, vanished. The few religious buildings of whose existence we catch a glimpse survived only as deserted ruins. So far was any connexion with Western Christianity from existing, that all the rest of the Christian world, whether of the Celtic or Roman obedience, lost sight of the conquered part of Britain altogether. When Rome long afterwards sought to renew its contact with it, it was as with a heathen country;[1] and it was in the same way as a heathen country that it was regarded by the Christians of Ireland and by the Christians of Wales. When missionaries at last made their way into its bounds, there is no record of their having found a single Christian in the whole country. What they found was a purely heathen land; a land where homestead and boundary and the very days of the week bore the names of new gods who had displaced Christ, and where the inhabitants were so strange to the faith they brought that they looked at its worship as magic.[2] It is hardly possible to conceive a stronger proof that

[1] Bæda, H. E. lib. i. c. 23. The first Roman missionaries thought of returning home rather than of encountering these heathen; "redire domum potius, quam barbaram, feram, incredulamque gentem, cujus ne linguam quidem nossent, adire cogitabant."

[2] Bæda, H. E. lib. i. c. 25.

the conquest of Britain had been a real displacement of the British people; for if Wodenism so utterly supplanted Christianity, it can only have been because the worshippers of Woden had driven off from the soil the worshippers of Christ.

Influence of Roman Britain on the English.

Complete, however, as was the wreck of Roman life, complete as was the displacement up to this point of the older British population, the past history of the island was not without its influence on the new settlers. Its physical structure to a great extent dictated the lines of their advance, the extent of their conquest, and their political distribution over the conquered soil, as it had dictated the conquest and settlement of the races that had preceded them. The province indeed gave its bounds to the new England. It was not the island of Britain which Engle and Saxon had mastered, it was the portion of it which lay within the bounds of the Roman Empire. Even in its widest advance, English life stopped abruptly at the Friths of Forth and of Clyde, as Roman life had stopped there before it; while it penetrated but slowly and imperfectly into the western and and north-western districts of Britain, as Rome had penetrated but slowly and imperfectly into them. The mountains and moors which had checked the progress of the one invader, checked the progress of the other. But even within the limits of conquered Britain, its physical features often shaped the settlement of the conquerors. The story of the conquest, as we have striven to follow it, has shown us how great an influence the very ground exerted on the direction and the fortunes of every English campaign. In the bulk of cases its character deter-

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mined the bounds, and with the bounds the after-destinies of the various peoples that parted the land between them. The Andredsweald with its outliers prisoned the Jutes within the limits of the Caint, and turned them into Cant-wara, or Kentish men. It dwarfed into political insignificance the Surrey-folk and the South-Saxons, whom it pressed between its northern edge and the Thames, or between its southern edge and the sea. The insular character of the Gwent upon the eastern coast forced the bands of invaders that landed there into political union as the people of the East-Angles. In the same way the long range of moorland and fen and sea-coast, which formed the frame-work of Yorkshire, and so long preserved the individuality of this portion of the island, furnished the Deirans with their natural boundaries, and made them, from the mere space they enclosed, one of the greater peoples of Britain.[1] The West-Saxons profited even more from the character of the ground which they traversed. Touching originally at the one point in the southern coast where access to the province was easy, they found their first settlements moulded by the bounds and divisions of the southern downs, while from their slopes to east-

[1] It is, however, remarkable that in the case of Yorkshire the incidents of the conquest modified the political boundaries of both Celtic and Roman times. In both, the territory on the western and eastern coast belonged to the same district, and the moorlands which part our Yorkshire from our Lancashire formed no boundary line. In the earlier days of the English conquest it seemed as if this arrangement would be preserved; and only a complicated set of transactions in later times made Yorkshire the separate district which it is.

ward and westward lay open before them the valleys of the Severn and the Thames. The territory of Ceawlin, with all the long series of events which widened the realm of the West-Saxons into the kingdom of England, were but the necessary issues of the physical circumstances which brought about their first landing and settlement in Britain.

Influence of its political and social structure.

Nor was the political structure of the province without as distinct an influence on the settlement of the invaders. The towns with their subject districts often gave shape and bounds to the states which their conquerors founded about their ruins. The districts of Camulodunum, Verulamium, and Londinium, made up the kingdom of the East-Saxons. The territory which the West-Saxons acquired after the battle of Bedford to the north of the Thames consisted of the districts of four cities, whose early names are forgotten. Those of Bath, Gloucester, and Cirencester, formed the territory of the Hwiccas. That of Ratæ or Leicester formed in all probability the territory of the Middle-English. And what was true of the political life of Britain was true also of its social life. If the Roman landowner had disappeared, if his villa was a mound of ashes and charred stones, if his cattle and serfs had been alike slaughtered or driven off from the soil, the material work which four hundred years of continuous life had done could not wholly pass away. After all his slaughter and pillage the Englishman found himself in no mere desert. On the contrary, he stood in the midst of a country, the material framework of whose civilization remained unharmed. The Roman road still struck like an

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arrow over hill and plain. The Roman bridge still spanned river and stream. If farmer and landowner had disappeared, farm and field remained; and if the conquerors settled at all, it was inevitable that they should settle in the bulk of cases beside the homes and on the estates of the men they had driven out. It was thus that the Roman "vill" often became the English township; that the boundaries of its older masters remained the bound-marks of the new; that serf and læt took the place of colonus and slave; while the system of cultivation was probably in the case of both peoples sufficiently identical to need little change in field or homestead.[1]

Roman Kent.

But if the old divisions of the land remained to furnish limits for the states of its conquerors, or bounds of field and farm for their settlers, the whole organization of government and society had disappeared with the men to whom it belonged. Rome was gone; and its law, its literature, its faith, had gone with it. The Briton himself was now simply a stranger, gazing back upon the land he had lost from a distant frontier. The mosaics, the coins, which we dig up in our fields are no relics of our fathers, but of a world which our fathers' sword swept utterly away. How thoroughly the work was done we can see in a single instance, that of the first land which the invaders won. In the days before the Jutish conquest few parts of the island were wealthier

[1] It is in this settlement on the existing estates, etc., that we find the explanation of many facts adduced by Mr. Coote, in his various works, to prove the continuity of the life of Roman Britain.

or more populous than the Caint or Kent, the chalk upland which jutted into the Channel between the alluvial flats of the Thames estuary and the mouth of the Weald.[1] This district had, in fact, been one of the earliest points of human settlement in Britain. In Roman times its towns were small and unimportant; those of the coast seem simply to have been military stations of the Saxon shore, while Durovernum and Durobrivæ were little clusters of houses that had grown up at the passages of the Stour and the Medway. But in the valleys of these rivers population must have lain thickly; even the flats along the coast of the Thames were the scene of busy industries; and if the homesteads which studded the face of the country were smaller and less splendid than those of south-western Britain, their number, as well as the absence of the military stations that were so abundant elsewhere, shows the peace and prosperity of a district which its position sheltered from the

[1] The Roman and Jutish Caint, it must be remembered, occupied a far smaller space of ground than our modern county of Kent; for the Weald, as yet uninvaded by axe or plough, threw its outskirts far and wide over the country on the south-west. Kemble, "Saxons in England," i. 483, says: "If we follow the main road from Hythe to Maidstone a little to the north of Aldington and running to the east of Boughton, we find a tract of country extending to the borders of Sussex and filled with places ending in 'den' or 'hurst' . . . along the edge of the Weald, within whose shades the 'swains' found 'mast and pasture.'" He enumerates a few of them which form a belt of mark or forest round the cultivated country quite independent of the woods which lay between village and village. Even within the bounds of the earlier Caint, too, the space fit for habitation was broken by thick woodlands like the Forest of Blean.

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Pictish forays that wasted the north and centre of the island.[1] The greater number of such houses lay along what had been the line of Hengest's inroad, along the road from Canterbury to London, and along the banks of the Medway. The fields which then bordered the lower valley of this river at Upchurch furnished the bulk of the common hardware used throughout the country, and the extent of its remains shows that it was the home of a large working population.[2] Potteries hardly less extensive existed on the brink of Romney Marsh, while from pits at Dartford, Crayford, and Chislehurst chalk was exported to Zealand, on the coast of which are still found altars to the goddess of the Kentish chalk-workers.[3]

Kent after the Conquest.

But with the conquest of the Jutes all this wealth and industry disappeared. The potteries sank into heaps of ruins amidst marshes that took the place of the meadows in which they stood. The country houses, as their ruins show, became heaps of blackened stone. The towns as they fell beneath the conqueror's sword were left burnt and desolate. The massacre which followed the victories of Hengest, indeed, showed the merciless nature of the warfare of the Jutes. While the wealthier Kentish landowners fled in panic over the sea, the poorer Britons took refuge in hill or forest, or among the neighbouring fastnesses of the Weald, till hunger drove them from

[1] See a paper on Roman Kent, by Roach Smith, in Archæol. Cantiana, II. xxxviii.

[2] Wright's "Celt, Roman, and Saxon," pp. 260, 261.

[3] Murray's "Kent," Introduction, pp. x. xi.

their lurking-places to be cut down or enslaved by their conquerors. It was in vain that some sought shelter within the walls of their churches, for the rage of the invaders seems to have burned fiercest against the clergy. The priests were slain at the altar, the churches fired, the peasants driven by the flames to fling themselves on a ring of pitiless steel.[1] For a while the ruin of the land must have seemed complete; and even when the settlement of the conquerors had brought a new life to its downs and river valleys, the wreck and solitude of the towns bore their witness to the completeness with which the older life had been done away. Durovernum remained

[1] Gildas, Hist., cap. 24, 25. "Confovebatur namque, ultionis justæ præcedentium scelerum causâ, de mari usque ad mare ignis orientalis, sacrilegorum manu exaggeratus, et finitimas quasque civitates agrosque populans, qui non quievit accensus, donec cunctam pene exurens insulæ superficiem rubrâ occidentalem trucique oceanum linguâ delamberet. . . . Ita ut cunctæ columnæ crebris arietibus, omnesque coloni cum præpositis ecclesiæ, cum sacerdotibus ac populo, mucronibus undique micantibus, ac flammis crepitantibus, simul solo sternerentur, et miserabili visu, in medio platearum, ima turrium edito cardine evulsarum, murorumque celsorum saxa, sacra altaria, cadaverum frusta, crustis ac semigelantibus purpurei cruoris tecta, velut in quodam horrendo torculari mixta viderentur, et nulla esset omnimodis, præter horribiles domorum ruinas, bestiarum volucrumque ventres, in medio sepultura. . . . Itaque nonnulli miserarum reliquiarum in montibus deprehensi acervatim jugulabantur; alii fame confecti accedentes, manus hostibus dabant, in ævum servituri, si tamen non continuo trucidarentur, quod altissimæ gratiæ stabat in loco; alii transmarinas petebant regiones, cum ululatu magno ceu celeusmatis vice, . . . alii montanis collibus, minacibus præruptis vallati, et densissimis saltibus, marinisque rupibus vitam, suspectâ semper mente, credentes, in patriâ licet trepidi perstabant."

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a waste till Æthelberht's day, and it is not till the eighth century that we hear of any new dwellers at Dover.[1] The sites of the deserted cities passed naturally into the common lands of the Cantwara, the folk-land which the Kentish king took for his own possession, or from which he made grants to his thegns; and it is thus that if we look in Æthelberht's day for the site of Regulbium we find it occupied by the king's "vill" of Reculver, while the Kentish Ceatta, no doubt though a royal grant, planted the "ham" which has grown into our Chatham on the banks of the Medway in the territory of the forsaken Durobrivæ. But even then he made his little settlement not within, but without its walls; and when the town reappears in the days of Æthelberht, it is no longer under its old name but under that of the Jutish Hrof who had at last taken it for his home, as Hrofes-ceaster,[2] or Rochester.

The new English society.

As we stand amidst the ruins of such towns or country-houses, and recall the wealth and culture of Roman Britain, it is hard to believe that a conquest which left them heaps of crumbling stones was other than a curse to the land over which it passed. But if the new England that sprang from the wreck of Britain seemed for the moment a waste from which the arts, the letters, the refinement of the world had fled hopelessly away, it contained within itself germs of a nobler life than that which had been destroyed.[3] Here,

1 Malmesbury, "Life of Aldhelm" (Anglia Sacra, ii. 20).

2 Eng. Chron. a. 604; Bæda, H. E. lib. ii. c. 3.

3 In the sketch of our early institutions I have mainly followed the guidance of Professor Stubbs through the chapters which

as everywhere throughout the Roman world, the base of social life was the peasant crushed by a deepening fiscal tyranny into the slave; while the basis of political life was the hardly less enslaved proprietor, disarmed, bound like his serf to the soil, and powerless to withstand the greed of a government in which he took no part. But, whether politically or socially, the base of the new English society was the freeman who had been tilling, judging, or fighting for himself by the Northern Sea. However roughly he dealt with the material civilization of Britain while the struggle went on, it was impossible that such a man could be a mere destroyer. War in fact was no sooner over than the warrior settled down into the farmer, and the home of the ceorl rose beside the heap of goblin-haunted stones that marked the site of the villa he had burned. The settlement of the conquerors was as direct a result of the character of the conquest as the withdrawal of the conquered people. It was the slowness of their advance, the small numbers of each separate band in its descent upon the coast, that made it possible for the invaders to bring with them, or to call to them when their work was done, the wives and

open his "Constitutional History." It must be remembered that we have little or no direct evidence for such a sketch, and can only infer the character of our institutions at this time, first, from the tenor of like German institutions in yet earlier days, and, secondly, from the character which English institutions had themselves assumed some centuries later, when we can trace their existing form in the laws. Although, however, some details may still remain doubtful, the general accuracy of the conclusions which historical inquiry has reached in this matter may be looked on as established.

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children, the læt and slave, even the cattle they had left behind them.[1] The wave of conquest was thus but a prelude to the gradual migration of a whole people.[2] For the settlement of the conquerors was nothing less than a transfer of English society in its fullest form to the shores of Britain. It was England that settled down on British soil, England with its own language, its own laws, its complete social fabric, its system of village life and village culture, its principle of kinship, its principle of representation. It was not as mere pirates or stray war-bands, but as peoples already made, and fitted by a common temper and common customs to draw together into one nation in the days to come, that our fathers left their home-land for the land in which we live.

Difficulties of union.

At first sight, indeed, there seemed little promise of national unity in the mass of war-bands and folks that had taken the place of the Provincials. One half of conquered Britain belonged to the Engle; the bulk of the rest had fallen to the Saxon; Kent and the Isle of Wight belonged to the Jute. Other peoples of the German coast seem to have joined in the work of conquest, for we may certainly add Frisians to the list of invaders, and probably Franks; but it was only as individual warriors or as separate war-bands that these can have joined in the invasion, and if any trace of their settlement existed it has wholly disappeared. But Jute, Engle, and Saxon were camped separately on the land, nor is there any

1 For the difference between the British and English cattle, see Boyd Dawkins, "Early Man in Britain," pp. 491, 492.

2 Stubbs, Const. Hist. i. 72, 73.

ground for believing that in this earlier time they regarded themselves as a single people. Even within each of these three main tribes themselves there can have been little unity or cohesion. On the eastern coast we are distinctly told that war-band after war-band landed under their own ealdormen, conquered their own tracts, and fought with one another as well as with the Britons before they were drawn together into the folk of the East-Anglians. How universal this state of things must have been we see from the numerous traces of such small peoples that we incidentally meet with in our later history. A single list, for instance, which has been by chance preserved to us, hands down the names of some thirty tribes, apparently belonging for the most part to Mid-Britain, of the bulk of whom all knowledge is lost, though a few can still be identified by the geographical character of their names.[1] But for this we should know nothing of the existence of the Chilternsetna, or people of the Chilterns; of the Elmedsetna, or settlers in Elmet; of the Pecsetna, or that branch of the Mercians who colonized the fastnesses of the Peak; or the Wrokensetna, who found a home at the base of the Wrekin.[2]

Separate folks.

Sporadic settlements of such isolated tribes, like the Meonwara on the Southampton Water, meet us constantly in the course of our story, and the dependent

[1] See this list, which was originally printed by Sir Henry Spelman in his Glossary, under the head *Hida*, in Kemble's "Saxons in England," vol. i. pp. 81, 82.

[2] The word in the list is Wokensetna; but a Mercian Charter (Cod. Dip. 277) has the word "Wreocensetun."

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kingdoms within the larger ones, such as that of Oidilwald in the Deira of Oswiu's day,[1] point to the survival of this separate life in one quarter or another even when aggregation into larger groups had become an irresistible tendency in the people at large. Even in Kent, quickly as it was organized into a single kingdom, it would seem as if the conquerors originally clustered around king or ealdorman in little groups, which were only gradually gathered together into one political body. The dwellers in the reclaimed flats of Romney Marsh, for instance, were long known as the Merscwara, or Marsh-folk, a name which points to a separate political existence at some early time; while along the coast to the east of them we find in the name of Folkestone the trace of another separate folk, which may, like the Merscwara, have been only gradually drawn into the general community that knew itself as the Cantwara, or dwellers in the Caint. There are still stronger traces of separate life in the country west of the Medway, which was afterwards known as West Kent. In Kentish tradition this tract represented an earlier kingdom under the rule of its own chieftain, though dependent on the Kentish king; and the tradition is supported by the foundation of a separate Bishoprick at Rochester, whose prelates were dependent on the Kentish Bishop at Canterbury.[2]

[1] Bæda, H. E. lib. iii. c. 23.

[2] Kemble, "Saxons in England," vol. i. p. 148, explains by this second Kentish kingdom the Kentish practice of two kings reigning together, as in the case of Eadric and Hlothere, or Wihtred and Æthelberht II. One of the later rulers, Sigired, calls himself "King of half Kent" (Cod. Dip. 110, 114).

But from the first the severance between such tribes must have been rather apparent than real. Even in their German homeland the ties of a common blood, common speech, common social and political institutions, were drawing the smaller peoples together into nations such as the Allemannians, the Saxons, and the Franks, at the time when these adventurers pushed across the sea for the winning of Britain; and the tendency to union which they thus carried with them could only have been strengthened by the strife that followed. Their common warfare with the Briton could not but unite them more closely. If we judge from the names of English settlements, as from a few recorded incidents of the struggle, we should gather that each people gave help to its fellows in the course of the contest, that Jutish warriors fought in the host of Cerdic as it won the Gwent, and that Saxon war-bands aided in the reduction of East Anglia, as Engle war-bands helped in the Saxon victory over the Four Towns. How irresistible the tendency towards union was from the very beginning, indeed, we see from the fact that the separate existence of the smaller communities we have spoken of had for the most part come to an end by the close of the sixth century. At that time the various Jutish tribes of Kent, whatever may have been their original isolation, were definitely fused in the people of the Cantwara; while the Chiltern-setna were lost in the West-Saxons, as the Pec-setna were lost in the

Real unity.

Malmesbury (Gest. Reg. lib. i. sec. 10) speaks of the "reguli" whom Æthelberht subdued.

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Merçians. No traces of the separate war-bands that conquered the island-like district on the eastern coast of Britain reach us in the recorded annals of the East-Anglians. When written history first shows us the new Britain in the pages of Bæda, we find the original mass of folks and war-bands already gathered together in some eight or nine distinct peoples;[1] and even these showing a tendency to group themselves in three great masses which soon became the kingdoms of Northern, Central, and Southern Britain. To bring these three masses together into a single nation proved a longer and a harder task. But distinct as they remained for two hundred years we see no trace of consciousness of any race difference between them. The lines of demarcation indeed which divide the one from the other are not race lines; the earliest of these over-kingdoms, that of Æthelberht, embraces Jute and Engle, if not Saxon, alike within its pale, and in the later conquest for supremacy over Britain, the strife is not a two-fold strife between Engle and Saxon, but a three-fold strife of a purely political order, in which the Engle kingdoms of Northúmbria and Mercia wage a fiercer fight against one another than that of either against the Saxons of the south. The only differences, in fact, that we can find between the various peoples who settle over the face of Britain are differences of dialect, or distinctions in the form of a buckle[2] or the shape of a grave-mound. As early

[1] Bæda, H. E. lib. i. c. 15.

[2] Wright ("Celt, Roman, and Saxon," pp. 481-2) considers the round buckles as peculiar to the Jutes, the cross-shaped to the Engle.

as Bæda's day they had learned to recognize themselves under a single collective name, as the people of the English.[1] In the whole structure of their life, political, social, domestic, religious, all were at one.

Civilization of the English.

Of the character of their life at this early time we can only speak generally. Barbarous as it seemed to Roman eyes, it was already touched by the civilization with which Rome was slowly transforming the barbaric world. Even in their German homeland, though its border nowhere touched the border of the Empire, Saxon and Engle were far from being strange to the arts and culture of Rome. Roman commerce, indeed, reached the shores of the Baltic along tracks which had been used for ages by traders, whether Etruscan[2] or Greek; and we have abundant evidence that the arts and refinement of Rome were brought into contact with these men of the north. Brooches, sword-belts, and shield-bosses which have been found in Sleswick, and which can be dated not later than the close of the third century, are clearly either of Roman make or closely modelled on Roman metal-work;[3] and discoveries of Roman coins in Sleswick peat-mosses afford a yet more conclusive proof of direct intercourse with the Empire. But apart from these outer influences the men of the three tribes were far from being mere savages. They were fierce warriors, but they were also busy fishers and tillers of the soil, as proud

[1] Bæda, H. E. i. 1, "quinque gentium linguis. . . . Anglorum videlicet, Brittonum, Scottorum, Pictorum, et Latinorum."—Stubbs, Const. Hist. i. 143.

[2] Boyd Dawkins, "Early Man in Britain," chap. xiii.

[3] Lubbock, "Prehistoric Times," pp. 9-11; Wright, "Celt, Roman, and Saxon," p. 498.

of their skill in handling plough and mattock or steering the rude boat with which they hunted walrus and whale as of their skill in handling sword and spear.[1] They were hard drinkers, no doubt, as they were hard toilers, and the "ale-feast" was the centre of their social life. But coarse as the revel might seem to modern eyes, the scene within the timbered hall which rose in the midst of their villages was often Homeric in its simplicity and dignity. Queen or Eorl's wife with a train of maidens bore ale-bowl or mead-bowl[2] round the hall, from the high settle of King or Ealdorman in the midst to the benches ranged around its walls, while the gleeman sang the hero-songs of his race. They had already a literature; and though the Roman missionaries had not as yet introduced their alphabet, the runic letters which these men shared with the other German races sufficed to record on tablets of oak or beech an epic such as that of Beowulf or the rude annals which, as those preserved in our present Chronicle show, already existed as materials for history.[3] Dress and arms showed traces of a love of art and beauty, none the less real that it was rude and incomplete. Rings, amulets, ear-rings, neck pendants, proved in their workmanship the deftness of the goldsmith's art. Cloaks were often fastened with golden buckles of curious and exquisite form, set sometimes with rough jewels and inlaid with

[1] Beowulf, vv. 1090-1120.

[2] See the fine scene in Beowulf, vv. 1226 to 1254, where Hrothgar's queen bears the mead-cup about his hall to the warriors and the hero.

[3] Guest, Early Eng. Settl. p. 39.

enamel.[1] The bronze boar-crest on the warrior's helmet, the intricate adornment of the warrior's shield, tell, like the honour in which the smith was held, their tale of industrial art.[2] The curiously-twisted glass goblets, so common in the early graves of Kent, are shown by their form to be of English workmanship.[3] It is only in the English pottery, hand-made, and marked with zig-zag patterns, that we find traces of rudeness.

Their Literature.

The same indications of a life far higher than that of mere barbarism are to be seen in their literature. Among the scanty relics of our early poetry we still find a few pieces which date from a time before the conquest of Britain.[4] Most of them are mere fragments; but even in these we find the two distinguishing features of our later verse—a tendency to melancholy and pathos, and a keen enjoyment and realization of outer nature.[5] The one large and complete work

[1] Large quantities of such ornaments have been found in the older burial-grounds, especially those of Kent. See the "Inventorium Sepulcrale" of Bryan Faussett for an account of these objects and their discovery.

[2] Beowulf, vv. 612-615. Wright, "Celt, Roman, and Saxon," p. 486; Kemble, "Saxons in England," i. 280.

[3] Roach Smith, in Arch. Cantiana, i. 46; Wright, "Celt, Roman, and Saxon," 495, etc.

[4] Such are "Deor's Complaint," a poem, says Mr. Sweet (in his Sketch of the History of Anglo-Saxon Poetry in Hazlitt's edition of Warton's "History of English Poetry," 1871, Preface to vol. ii.), almost lyric in its character, in which Deor, a poet who has been supplanted by a rival, consoles himself by the thought of heroes who have borne and survived greater ills than he; the "Gleeman's Tale," which is possibly a poetic riddle; and a fragment on the attack of Fin's palace in Friesland.

[5] See in Beowulf, vv. 2719 to 2756, the description of Grendel's abode, that "hidden land, where wolves lurk, windy

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which remains, the song of Beowulf, is the story of that hero's deeds; how alone at night-fall in King Hrothgar's hall he met the fiend Grendel, who for twelve years had carried off the King's warriors to devour them in his den; how to complete his victory he plunged into the dreadful lake where Grendel and Grendel's mother made their dwelling, and brought back their heads to Hrothgar; how, himself become a king, he is called in old age to meet a dragon that assails his people, forsaken by his comrades, and, though victorious, drained of his life-blood by the wounds he receives in the terrible grapple. The song as we have it now is a poem of the eighth century, the work it may be of some English missionary of the days of Bæda and Boniface, who gathered in the homeland of his race the legends of its earlier prime.[1]

nesses, perilous fen-tracts, where the mountain stream, shrouded in mists, pours down the cliffs, deep in earth. Not far from here stands the lake over-shadowed with groves of ancient trees, fast by their roots. There a dread fire may be seen every night shining wondrously in the water. The wisest of the sons of men knows not the bottom. When the heath-stalker, the strong-horned stag, hard pressed by the hounds, coursed from afar, seeks shelter in the wood, he will yield up his life on the shore sooner than plunge in and hide his head. That is an accursed place; the strife of waves rises black to the clouds when the wind stirs hostile storms, until the air darkens, the heavens shed tears."—Hazlitt's "Warton," vol. ii. Introd. by Mr. Sweet, p. 11.

[1] Mr. Sweet (Hazlitt's "Warton," vol. ii. p. 10) says: "It is evident that the poem, as we have it, has undergone considerable alterations. In the first place there is a distinctly Christian element, contrasting strongly with the general heathen current of the whole. Many of these passages are so incorporated into the poem that it is impossible to remove them without violent alterations of the text; others again are palpable interpolations.

But the thin veil of Christianity which he has flung over it fades away as we follow the hero-legend of our fathers; and the secret of their moral temper, of their conception of life, breathes through every line. Life was built with them, not on the hope of a hereafter, but on the proud self-consciousness of noble souls. "I have this folk ruled these fifty winters,"[1] sings the hero-king as he sits death-smitten beside the dragon's mound. "Lives there no folk-king of kings about me—not any one of them—dare in the war-strife welcome my onset! Time's change and chances I have abided, held my own fairly, sought not to snare men; oath never sware I falsely against right. So for all this may I glad be at heart now, sick though I sit here, wounded with death-wounds!" In men of such a temper, strong with the strength of manhood and full of the vigour and the love of life, the sense of its shortness and of the mystery of it all woke chords of a pathetic poetry. "Soon will it be," ran the warning rime, "that sickness or sword-blade shear thy strength from thee, or the fire ring thee, or the flood whelm thee, or the sword grip thee, or arrow hit thee, or age o'ertake thee, and thine eye's brightness sink down in darkness." Strong as he might be, man struggled in vain with the doom that

. . . Without these additions and alterations it is certain that we have in Beowulf a poem composed before the Teutonic conquest of Britain. The localities are purely continental; the scenery is laid among the Goths of Sweden and the Danes; in the episodes the Swedes, Frisians, and other continental tribes appear, while there is no mention of England, or the adjoining countries and nations."

[1] Beowulf, vv. 5458 to 5474.

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encompassed him, that girded his life with a thousand perils and broke it at so short a span. "To us," cries Beowulf in his last fight, "to us it shall be as our Weird betides, that Weird that is every man's lord!" But the sadness with which they fronted the mysteries of life and death had nothing in it of the unmanly despair which bids men eat and drink for to-morrow they die. Death leaves man man, and master of his fate. The thought of good fame, of manhood, is stronger than the thought of doom. "Well shall a man do when in the strife he minds but of winning longsome renown, nor for his life cares!"[1] "Death is better than life of shame!"[2] cries Beowulf's sword-fellow. Beowulf himself takes up his strife with the fiend, "go the weird as it will." If life is short, the more cause to work bravely till it is over. "Each man of us shall abide the end of his life-work; let him that may work, work his doomed deeds ere death come!"[3]

Their Religion.

It is in words such as these that we must look for the religious temper of Saxon or Engle, rather than in what is commonly called their religion. Their gods were the same as those of the rest of the German peoples, for though Christianity had won over the Roman Empire, it had not penetrated as yet into the forests of the north. Our own names for the days of the week still recall to us the deities whom our fathers worshipped. Wednesday is the day of Woden, the war-god, the guardian of ways and boundaries, the

[1] Beowulf, vv. 3073 to 3077.
[2] Beowulf, vv. 5774 to 5777.
[3] Beowulf, vv. 2777 to 2780.

inventor of letters, the common god of the whole conquering people, and whom each of the conquering tribes held to be the first ancestor of its kings.[1] Thursday is the day of Thunder, the god of air, and storm, and rain; as Friday is Frea's day, a deity of peace, and joy, and fruitfulness, whose emblems borne aloft by dancing maidens, brought increase to every field and stall they visited. Saturday may commemorate an obscure god, Sœtere; and some early worship of sun and moon perhaps left its trace in the names of Sunday and Monday;[2] while Tuesday was dedicated to Tiw, once like the Greek Zeus, with whose name his own is connected, the god of the sky, but who in later days sank into a dark and terrible deity to meet whom was death. Behind these floated dim shapes of an older mythology; Eostre, the god of the dawn or of the spring, who lent her name in after days to the Christian festival of the Resurrection; Wyrd, the death-goddess, whose memory lingered long in the weird of northern superstition; or the Shield Maidens, the mighty women who, an old rime tells us, "wrought on the battle-field their toil, and hurled the thrilling javelins." Nearer to the popular fancy

[1] Bæda, H. E. i. 15. Woden was the ancestor of the royal stocks of Kent, East-Anglia, Essex, Mercia, Deira, Bernicia, by his sons Wehta, Casere, Seaxnote, Weothelgeat, Wægdæg, and Bældæg; of the West-Saxons, by his great-grandson, Frothegar. The ealdormen of the Lindiswaras claimed descent from his son Winta. (See Genealogies in Flor. Worc. ed. Thorpe, i. 248 *et seq.*)

[2] It is more probable, however, that when the Week passed from the Roman world into use among the Germans, these three names passed with it.

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lay deities of wood and fell, like Nicor the water-sprite, who left his name to our nixies and "Old Nick," or hero-gods of legend and song. In the star-strown track of the Milky Way, our fathers saw a road by which the hero-sons of Waetla marched across the sky, and poetry only hardened into prose when they transferred the name of Watling Street to the great trackway which passed athwart the island they had won, from London to Chester. The stones of Weyland's Smithy still recall the days when the new settlers told one another on the conquered ground the wondrous tale they had brought with them from their German home, the tale of the god-like smith Weland, who forged the arms that none could blunt or break,[1] just as they told around Wadanbury and Wadanhlaew the strange tale of Wade and his boat.[2] When men christened mere and tree with Scyld's name, at Scyldšmere and Styldstreow, they must have been familiar with the story of the god-like child who came over the waters to found the royal line of the Gewissas.[3] So a name like Hnaefs-scylf shows that the tale of Hnaef was then a living part of English mythology;[4] and a name like Aylesbury may preserve the last trace of the legend told of Weland's brother, the sun-archer Ægil.

But it is only in broken fragments that this mass

[1] For Weland's story see "Exeter Book," p. 367; and Kemble, "Saxons in England," vol. i. p. 421.

[2] For Wade see Kemble, "Saxons in England," vol. i. p. 420.

[3] For Scyld's tale see Beowulf, vv. 7 to 104. Æthelheard, book iii. Malmesbury, "Gesta Regum," lib. ii. p. 116. Kemble, "Saxons in England," vol. i. p. 414.

[4] Hnaef, see Beowulf, line 2130 *et seq.*

Its weak hold on Englishmen.

of early faith and early poetry still lives for us, in a name, in the grey stones of a cairn, or in snatches of verse embodied in our older song. Like all ancient religion, indeed, such a faith, linking itself as it did with the new settlers mainly through the blood of their kings, embodied only in nature-myths or poetic legends, and without any moral significance for the guidance of men, had in it little of what the modern world means by a religion; and the faint traces of worship or of priesthood which we find in later history show how lightly it clung to the national life. There were temples, indeed, as we see in Kent, in Northumbria, and in East Anglia alike,[1] rough wooden buildings in a hallowed inclosure, whose name of frith-geard or peace-yard tells of a right of sanctuary, and whose inner shrine inclosed images or emblems of the gods with altars before them. But at the conversion such buildings were changed, with no apparent shock to the popular conscience, into Christian churches; and that right of sanctuary which the frith-geard possessed still clung to it under its new name of churchyard. There were priests, too, whom custom forbade to wield the warrior's weapon, or to mount the warrior's horse, but who played a prominent part not only in the religious but in the civil life of their fellow tribesmen.[2] The story, however, of the conversion of Britain to Christianity, which we have soon to follow, shows how little religious weight or

[1] Bæda, H. E., lib. i. c. 30; ii. 13, 15.

[2] Eddi's "Life of Wilfred," c. 1 (Raine, "Historians of Church of York," p. 20).

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influence these priests possessed. Only one of them indeed is mentioned as playing a part in the religious change, and he is an active agent in promoting it.[1]

Religion and the soil.

The weak hold of their religion on the new settlers strikes us as forcibly when we see how feebly their faith stamped itself on the face of the conquered country. Woden, indeed, the god of the race, left his name everywhere, on brook and pool and ford, on tree and barrow.[2] We hear his name in Wansbrook or Woden's brook, in Wanspool and Wansford, as in Woden's tree or Wanstreow, and Woden's barrow or Wanborough. Above all, as the border-god he hallows the boundary lines that part tribe from tribe or conquered from conqueror. The long dyke that stretches from a point just south of Malmesbury by Bath to the Bristol Channel, which had been a bound of the Belgæ, and served for a while as a bound of the West-Saxon, still retains the name which the last conquerors gave it, of the Woden's Dyke or Wansdyke. At an earlier stage of their advance, the Gewissas had halted on the crest of the great escarpment of the Wiltshire Downs, and here Wanborough, looking out over the Valley of the White Horse, marks the limits of Cynric's conquests.[3] But of his fellow-deities the traces are few. Thunder leaves signs of his worship in places like Thundersfield or Thundersley; and Pol,

[1] Coifi, Bæda, H. E. lib. ii. c. 13.

[2] I follow here Kemble, "Saxons in England," i. cap. 12.

[3] We may add Wanborough, on the Hog's-Back of the North Downs, a spot which "in all probability has been a sacred site for every religion which has been received into Britain."—Kemble, i. 344.

as the god whom the Northmen called Balder may have been styled on English ground, still lingers about us in our Polsteads and Poldons, our Polsleys and Polthorns. Even the lesser deities or fiends of popular fancy found hardly more numerous homes. Here and there a few names preserve the memory of the sacred stone, or mere, or tree, or mound, where men reverenced of old Scyld, the hero-child, or Ægil, the sun-archer, or shuddered at Grendel, the fiend. But like the names of greater gods, such names are thinly scattered over the soil. We feel as we glean them that we are not in presence of an indigenous religion; and it may be that in the weakness of its grip on the soil to which it had been transplanted we see one at least of the causes why the faith of the English yielded so easily to the Christian missionaries.

The English as warriors.

Of their military life we naturally know more than of their religious. We meet them first as sea-men, and in spite of hasty assertions to the contrary, there never was a time from that age to this when Englishmen lost their love for the sea.[1] Everywhere throughout Beowulf's song, as everywhere throughout the life that it pictures, we catch the salt whiff of the sea. The warrior is as proud of his sea-craft as of his war-craft; sword in hand he plunges into the waves to meet walrus and sea-lion; he tells of his whale-chase amidst the icy waters of the north.[2] The same seafaring temper shows itself in later days in the very names of the bark that traverses the sea. In the

[1] The common statement which attributes our love of the sea to the coming of the Danes is a simple error.

[2] Beowulf, vv. 1070 to 1120.

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fond playfulness of English verse the ship became the "wave-floater," the "foam-necked," "like a bird" as it skimmed the wave-crest, "like a swan" as its curved prow breasted the swan-road of the sea. With their landing in Britain, however, the purely sea-faring life of the pirates was over, but they showed themselves none the less formidable as warriors on land. In his own eyes, indeed, every one of the conquerors of Britain was above all a warrior. The real opening of his life, his passing from boyhood to manhood, was the day when at the age of fifteen[1] the delivery of arms to him made him a full member of the folk as it made him a warrior of the host, or folk in arms. The armour of such a freeman has been preserved for us in the grave-mounds which are scattered over the face of England: the coat of ringed mail;[2] the long iron sword[3] with its single edge, its hilt curiously wrought of silver or bronze, or scored with mystic runes,[4] its

[1] At twelve (Ll. Hloth. et Ead. 6); then at twelve (Æthelstan II. c. i.); and then at fifteen (Æthelstan VI. 12). (Thorpe's "Ancient Laws," vol. i. 31, 199, 241.)

[2] See Beowulf, v. 673, for the warrior's "grey sarks"; and cf. "Laws of Ine," 54 (Thorpe's "Ancient Laws," vol. i. p. 139).

[3] "In the large broad-sword may be recognised the 'spatha' in common use by many of the Roman auxiliaries, and by the Romans themselves in later times. From their weight and length they could only be wielded by horsemen."—Roach Smith, on Anglo-Saxon remains at Faversham, etc. Archæol. Cantiana, i. 47. "The spear may be called the national weapon."—Ib. In the English grave-grounds two kinds of spears are found, one like the Roman pilum, another smaller and slighter, like the framea of Tacitus, which was part of the equipment of horsemen. The spear was valued above the sword. Ine's "Laws," 29 (Thorpe's "Ancient Laws," vol. i. p. 121).

[4] Beowulf, line 3393, "So was on the surface of the bright

wooden scabbard, tipped and edged with bronze; the short seax, at once dagger and knife, slung like the sword from the girdle; the long ashen spear; the small round "war-board" or shield of the yellow lime-wood with its iron boss, which was held in the warrior's hand; the skull-cap or helmet with the iron-wrought figure of a boar above it. From the day of his arming with arms such as these, the training of the freeman was in war.[1] His very sports were of war-like sort. The wolf was still common, the bear yet lingered in the woods, the wild boar roused from its lair rushed madly on the huntsman, the wild ox stood at bay in the forest depths. Often the chase was a mimic war; the wood was surrounded, and wild beast and deer were driven by the serfs into high-fenced inclosures, where the nobler huntsmen with bow and hunting-spear slew them at will.

Life itself warlike.

But this mimicry of war had soon to be exchanged for war itself. The world of these men was in fact a world of warfare; tribe warred with tribe, and village with village; even within the village itself feuds parted household from household, and passions of hatred and vengeance were handed on from father to son.

gold with runic letters rightly marked, set, and laid, for whom that sword was first made, with hilt twisted and variegated like a snake."

[1] For early English arms see Wright, "Celt, Roman, and Saxon," pp. 470-478. The type of arms remained unaltered till the coming of the Danes. The axe, which was common enough among the Franks, is but seldom found even in Kent; elsewhere it is of the rarest occurrence. Arrow-heads, too, though sometimes found, are rare.

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To live at all, indeed, in this early world it was needful, if not to fight, at any rate to be ready to fight. It was by his own right hand that a man kept life and goods together; it was his own right hand that guarded him from wrong, or avenged him if wrong were done. Law had not as yet trodden the blood-feud underfoot, or undertaken the task of carrying its own dooms into effect; it had done little more than give form to the right of personal vengeance.[1] And besides the world of social strife there was the wider field of public war, the fight of tribe with tribe, and people with people. It was by no chance that the Folk, when it gathered to the Folk-moot, gathered in arms,[2] that even the deliberations of the assembled tribesmen were the "rede" of warriors, and that the "aye, aye," with which they approved the counsel of the Ealdormen was half-drowned by the clash of spear on shield. The very form of a people was wholly military. The Folk-moot was in fact the war-host, the gathering of every freeman of the tribe in arms. The head of the Folk, whether Ealdorman or King, was the leader whom the host chose to command it. Its Witenagemote or meeting of wise men was the host's council of war, the gathering of those ealdormen who had brought the men of their villages to the field.

The Host.

The host was formed by levies from the various districts of the tribe; the larger of which may have owed their name of "hundreds" to the hundred warriors which each originally sent to it.[3] In historic times,

[1] "Essays in Anglo-Saxon Law," cap. iv. "Legal Procedure."

[2] Stubbs, Const. Hist. i. 32.

[3] Ibid. i. 81, 112.

however, the regularity of such a military organization, if it ever existed, had passed away, and the quotas varied with the varying custom of each district. But men, whether many or few, were still due from each district to the host, and a cry of war at once called tun-reeve and hundred-reeve with their followers to the field. However rude such a military organization may seem, it had in it qualities which no soldier will undervalue. Each group of warrior-kinsmen who fought in loose order round ealdorman or lord was bound together by the tie of blood, by the mutual trust of men who had been life-long comrades, by a life-long practice in arms, and by the discipline that comes of obedience habitually rendered to one who was recognized as a natural chief. But the strength of an English army lay not only in these groups of villagers. Mingled with them were the voluntary war-bands that gathered round distinguished chiefs. From the earliest times of German society it had been the wont of young men greedy of honour or seeking training in arms to bind themselves as "comrades" to king or chief.[1] The leader whom they chose gave them horses, arms, a seat in his mead hall, and gifts from his hoard. The "comrade" on the other hand—the gesith or thegn, as he was called—bound himself to follow and fight for his lord. The principle of personal dependence as distinguished from the warrior's general duty to the folk at large was embodied in the thegn. "Chieftains fight for victory," says Tacitus; "comrades for their chieftain." When one of Beowulf's "comrades" saw his lord hard bested "he

[1] Stubbs, Const. Hist. i. 27.

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minded him of the homestead he had given him, of the folk right he gave him as his father had it; nor might he hold back then." Snatching up sword and shield, he called on his fellow-thegns to follow him to the fight. "I mind me of the day," he cried, "when we drank the mead, the day we gave pledge to our lord in the beer hall as he gave us these rings, our pledge that we would pay him back our war-gear, our helms and our hard swords, if need befel him. Unmeet is it, methinks, that we should bear back our shields to our home unless we guard our lord's life." [1]

Organization of the State.

It was this military organization of the tribe that gave from the first its form to the civil organization. In each of the little kingdoms which rose on the wreck of Britain, the host would camp on the land it had won, and the divisions of the host supplied here as in its older home a rough groundwork of local distribution. The land occupied by the hundred warriors who formed the unit of military organization became perhaps the local hundred; though it is needless to attach any notion of precise uniformity, either in the number of settlers or in the area of their settlement, to such a process as this, any more than to the army organization which the process of distribution reflected.[2] From the large amount of public land which we find existing afterwards it has been conjectured with some probability that the number of settlers was far too small to occupy the whole of the country at their disposal,

[1] Beowulf, vv. 5259 *et seq.*

[2] Stubbs, Const. Hist. i. 81, 82.

and this unoccupied ground became "folk-land," the common property of the tribe as at a later time of the nation.[1] What ground was actually occupied may have been assigned to each group and each family in the group by lot; and the little knots of kinsmen drew again together in "tun" and "ham" beside the Thames or the Trent, as they had settled beside the Elbe or the Weser. But the peculiar shape which the civil organization of these communities assumed was determined by a principle familiar to the Germanic races and destined to exercise a vast influence on the future of mankind. This was the principle of representation. The four or ten villagers who followed the reeve of each township to the general muster of the hundred were held to represent the whole body of the township from whence they came.[2] Their voice was its voice, their doing its doing, their pledge its pledge. The Hundred-moot, a moot which was made by this gathering of the representatives of the townships that lay within its bounds, became in this way a court of appeal from the moots of each separate village as well as of arbitration in dispute between township and township. The judgment of graver crimes and of life or death fell to its share; while it necessarily possessed the same right of law-making for the hundred that the village-moot possessed for each separate village.[3] And as hundred-moot stood above

1 Stubbs, Const. Hist. i. 82. 2 Ibid. i. 103.

3 For the Hundred-moot, see Stubbs, Const. Hist. i. 119, 120. He adds, "In the south of England the names of the hundreds are often derived from those of the central towns; but in the midland and northern districts they seem like echoes of a

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town-moot, so far above the hundred-moot stood the Folk-moot, the general muster of the people in arms, at once war-host and highest law-court and general Parliament of the tribe. But whether in Folk-moot or Hundred-moot, the constitutional forms, the forms of deliberation and decision, were the same. In each the priests proclaimed silence, the ealdormen of higher blood spoke, groups of freemen from each township stood round, shaking their spears in assent, clashing shields in applause, settling matters in the end by loud shouts of "Aye" or "Nay."[1]

The King.

It seems probable that the conquering tribes had hitherto known nothing of Kings in their own father-land, where each was satisfied in peace time with the customary government of hundred-reeve or Ealdorman, while it gathered at fighting times under war leaders whom it chose for each campaign. But in the long and obstinate warfare which they waged against the Britons it was needful to find a common

wilder and more primitive society. The Yorkshire wapentake of Skyrack recalls the Shire Oak as the place of meeting; so in Derbyshire we have Appletree; in Hertfordshire, Edwinstree; in Herefordshire, Webtree and Greytree; in Worcestershire, Dodingtree; in Leicestershire, Gartree. Osgodcross, Ewcross, Staincross, Buckross, mark centres of jurisdiction which received names after the acceptance of Christianity. Claro or Clarhow, in Yorkshire, was the moot-hill of its wapentake; similarly, Leicestershire has Sparkinho; Norfolk, Greenho and Grimshoe; and Lincolnshire, Calnodshoe. Others preserve the names of some ancient lord or hero, as the Worcestershire Oswaldslaw, and the Lincolnshire Aslacoe; or the holy well, as the Yorkshire Hallikeld. The Suffolk Thingoe preserves a reminiscence of the court itself as the Thing."

[1] Stubbs, Const. Hist. i. 32.

leader whom the various tribes engaged in conquests such as those of Wessex or Mercia might follow; and the ceaseless character of a struggle which left few intervals of rest or peace raised these leaders into a higher position than that of temporary chieftains. It was no doubt from this cause that we find Hengest and his son Æsc raised to the kingdom in Kent, or Ælle in Sussex, or Cerdic and Cynric among the West Saxons. But, sprung as he was from war, the king was no mere war-leader, nor was he chosen on the ground of warlike merit. His office was not military but national; his creation marked the moment when the various groups of conquering warriors felt the need of a collective and national life; and the ground of his choice was his descent from the national god, Woden. As representing this national life, his rank was a permanent, not a temporary one; and the association of son with father in the new kingship marked the hereditary character which distinguished it from the office of an Ealdorman.[1] The change was undoubtedly a great one, but it was less than the modern conception of kingship would lead us to imagine. Hereditary as the succession was within a single house, each successive king was still the free choice of his people, and for centuries to come it was held within a people's right to pass over a claimant too weak or too wicked for the throne. In war indeed the king was supreme. But in peace his power was narrowly bounded by the customs of his people and the rede of his wise men. Justice was not as yet the king's

[1] Stubbs, Constit. Hist. i. 75-77.

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justice, it was the justice of village and hundred and folk in town-moot and hundred-moot and folk-moot. It was only with the assent of the wise men that the king could make laws and declare war and assign public lands and name public officers. Above all, should his will be to break through the free customs of his people, he was without the means of putting his will into action, for the one force he could call on was the host, and the host was the people itself in arms.

Eorl and Ceorl.

Directly, therefore, the new kingship made as yet little change in the political life of the conquering peoples. But indirectly it brought about from the first a great social change. An English community knew but two orders of men, the ceorl or the freeman, and the eorl or the noble.[1] The freeman was the base of the village society. He was the "free-necked man," whose long hair floated over a neck which had never bowed to a lord. He was the "weaponed man" who alone bore spear and sword, and who alone preserved that right of self-redress or private war which in such a state of society formed the main check upon lawless outrage.[2] But the social centre of the village was the eorl, or as he was sometime called the ætheling, whose homestead rose high above the lowlier dwellings of the ceorls. It is possible that in the original formation of German society the eorl represented the first settler in the waste, while the ceorls sprang from descendants of this

[1] Læt and slave, of whom we speak later, did not belong to the community.

[2] Kemble, Sax. in Engl. i. 131.

early settler who had in various ways forfeited their claim to a share in the original homestead, or more probably from incomers into the village who had since settled round it and been admitted to a share in the land and freedom of the community. But whatever may have been the origin of the distinction between freeman and noble, it had become a fixed element of their social order at the time when Engle and Saxon crossed into Britain. In every new settlement the eorl was distinguished from his fellow villagers by his wealth and his nobler blood, he was held by them in an hereditary reverence, and it was from him and his fellow nobles that host leaders, whether of the hundred or the tribe, were chosen in times of war.

The Thegn.

But with the rise of kingship a new social distinction began to grow up on the ground, not of hereditary rank in the community, but of service done to the king. It was from among the chiefs whose war-band was strongest that the leaders of the host were commonly chosen; and as these leaders grew into kings, the number of their thegns naturally increased. The rank of the "comrades" too rose with the rise of their lord. The king's thegns were his body-guard, the one force ever ready to carry out his will. They were his nearest and most constant counsellors. As the gathering of petty tribes into larger kingdoms swelled the number of eorls in each realm and in a corresponding degree diminished their social importance, it raised in equal measure the rank of the king's thegns. A post among them was soon coveted and won by the greatest and noblest. Their service

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was rewarded by exemption from the general jurisdiction of hundred-moot or folk-moot, for it was part of a thegn's meed for his service that he should be judged only by the lord he served. Other meed was found in grants of public land which made thegns a local nobility, no longer bound to actual service in the king's household or in the king's war-band, but still bound to him by personal ties of allegiance far closer than those which bound an eorl to the chosen war-leader of his tribe. In a word thegnhood contained within itself the germ of the later feudalism which was to battle so fiercely with the Teutonic freedom out of which it grew.[1]

The Township.

To view, however, the new settler in Britain simply as a warrior would be false and incomplete. In the old world the divorce which modern society has established between the soldier and the citizen, the fighter and the toiler, did not exist. No chasm parted war from civil life; the solemn arming made the young Englishman not only a warrior but a freeman,[2] a man of the folk, a tiller with a right to his share in field and pasture and waste, a ruler of his village, with his own due place in village-moot and hundred-moot. The unit of social life, indeed, was the cluster of such farmers' homes, each set in its own little croft, which made up the Township or the tun. The tun was surrounded by an earthen mound

1 For Thegnhood, see Stubbs, Const. Hist. i. 27, 28, 175-85; Kemble, Sax. in Engl. i. 162 *et seq.*

2 "The young men are, till they are admitted to the use of arms, members of the family only, not of the state."—Stubbs, Constit. Hist. i. 24.

tipped with a stockade or quickset hedge, as well as defended externally by a ditch;[1] and each township was thus a ready-made fortress in war, while in peace its entrenchments were serviceable in the feuds of village with village, or house with house. The importance of its defences, indeed, was shown by the customary law which forced every dweller within them to take part in their rearing and repair.[2] Inside the mound lay the homes of the villagers, the farmsteads, with their barns and cattle stalls; and in the centre of them rose the sacred tree or mound where the village with its elders met in the tun-moot which gave order to their social and industrial life. Outside the mound in close neighbourhood to the village lay the home pastures and folds, where the calves and lambs of individual cultivators were reared. In these, and in the "yrfeland," or "family estate," held apart from the lands of his fellow-freeman by the ætheling or noble,[3] we find the first traces of a personal property strongly in contrast with the common holding which prevailed through the rest of the township.[4] Beyond and around these home-pastures lay the village plough-land, generally massed together in

[1] "The tun," says Professor Stubbs, Const. Hist. vol. i. p. 93, *note*, "is originally the inclosure or hedge, whether of the single farm or the inclosed village; as the burh is the fortified house of the powerful man."

[2] "Laws of Æthelstan," i. 13; Thorpe's "Laws and Institutes," i. 207; Stubbs, Constit. Hist. i. 87.

[3] "Essays in Anglo-Saxon Law" (Boston, 1876), p. 55, etc.

[4] Nasse, in his "Land-Community of the Middle Ages" (Cobden Club, 1871), pp. 15-30, gives a full account of this village-system of common holding in early England.

three or four large "fields," each of which was broken by raised balks into long strips of soil that were distributed, in turn, among the village husbandmen. The whole was inclosed by a borderland or mark, which formed the common pasture where flock and herd could be turned out by every freeman to graze, though in numbers determined by usage or the rede of the village-moot.[1]

Its boundaries.

For the most part each township lay, no doubt, within the area of older British or Roman settlements, but its bounds were no longer marked by the measurements and the land-marks of the Roman surveyor. As in many of our modern settlements, where population and property have hardly come into being, the boundary line could only be drawn from one natural object to another. In a country where woodland was so frequent, the mark-tree could not fail to be common,[2] and the need of forming a boundary line

Beside the free township, there were, no doubt from the earliest times, townships which had grown up round the house of a noble, or ætheling, and which were tenanted by his dependants. In such cases, however, as yet, the village organization was little affected by the lord's neighbourhood; he no doubt named its reeve; but the reeve and the men of the township judged according to custom, and distributed lands as in other townships. —Stubbs, Constit. Hist. i. 93-4. The land itself, however, was in such a case the lord's, and not the common freehold of the villagers; and would, no doubt, be held from the first by them subject to service on the portion which the lord held in his personal possession.. In later times the dependent townships became an important body; but in the first days of the settlement they were probably exceptional. Palgrave, however, regarded them as from the first the common form of English holding ("Commonwealth," i. p. 65).

[2] The trees most frequently named in these land-boundaries

may have combined with some survival of the older tree-worship in the dedication of such objects to hero or lord. We hear of Scyld's tree, and Nicor's thorn, of Tiw's thorn, or Freya's tree, as landmarks of districts or estates; the special god of border and mark gave his name to the Woden's oak or the Woden's[1] stock; while sometimes what must have been a sacred group of trees, as in the Kentish Seven-oaks, forms a starting point for the border lines of more than one district. The choice of burial mounds or burial places, which was almost as common, may have been dictated by like mingled motives of convenience and religion; but for the most part the boundary track runs naturally enough from one feature of the landscape to another, from the "marked oak," along the "marked eaves," or edges of forest or copse, by the "border brook," and over the hero's "hlaew" or burial-mound to the "grey stones" that pointed back to a primæval eld.[2]

The Freeman's home.

If we pass from the township to the homes within its bounds, we see the freeman himself in that outer garb of peace and industry which has been brought down to us by the ploughman and peasant of to-day, in his smock-frock, a coarse linen overcoat that fell to the knees, and whose tight sleeves and breast were worked with elaborate embroidery.[3] Feet and legs

are the oak, ash, beech, thorn, elder, lime, and birch.—Kemble, "Saxons in England," vol. i. p. 52, *note*.

[1] Kemble, Cod. Dip. 436, 268, 174, 262, 496, 287.

[2] Kemble, "Saxons in England," 52, *note* 4.

[3] It was only in texture and colour that this dress differed in different classes of society. It was either of linen or wool. (Bæda, H. E. iv. 19.) The noble was distinguished from the

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were wrapped in linen bands, cross-gartered and party-coloured, as high as the knees;[1] a hood sheltered the head in winter-tide; and among the nobles or wealthier ceorls, a short cloak of blue cloth, often embroidered with fanciful figure-work, and fastened at the shoulder with a costly buckle, was thrown over the frock for warmth or ornament.[2] The house of such a villager naturally varied in size and importance with the wealth and rank of its owner. Dwellings were everywhere of wood.[3] Even in the wealthier Roman villas only the sub-structures seem to have been of stone or brick; and the new settlers, accustomed to wooden dwellings in their own land, found in Britain a wealth of forest and woodland which supplied abundant material for construction near every township.[4] The centre of the homestead was

ceorl by his embroidered belt and golden sword-hilt.—Kemble, "Saxons in England," vol. ii. p. 145.

[1] Hosen were sometimes made of hide softened with grease or fat (Bæda, Vit. Cuthbert, c. xviii.).

[2] The love of bright and varied colours was strong in both men and women; in later days monasticism had no harder battle to fight than in bringing its votaries to content themselves with the undyed vestments required by its rule. (See Cuthbert's struggle for this at Lindisfarne, Bæda, "Opera Minora," Stevenson, p. 82.) And down to the very era of the Danish wars, saints and councils were busy in denouncing the silken hoods and the gaily-coloured leg bands, which broke even the garb of the English clergy.

[3] Bæda, H. E. ii. 14; iii. 16, 17.

[4] As the country cleared, the 'silva infructuosa' or wood reserved on every farm, for building and fencing, became of increasing importance, as is shown by the laws against cutting down or burning trees, as well as by the inclusion of such woods in the Domesday survey.

the hall, with the hearth-fire in the midst of it,[1] whose smoke made its escape as best it could through a hole in the roof. The hall, indeed, was the common living-place of all the dwellers within the house. Here the "board," set up on trestles when needed, furnished a rough table for the family meal; and when the board was cleared away, the women bore[2] the wooden beer-cups or drinking-horns to the house-master and his friends as they sat on the settles or benches ranged round the walls,[3] while the gleeman sang his song,[4] or the harp was passed around from hand to hand.[5] Here, too, when night came and the fire died down, was the common sleeping-place, and men lay down to rest on the bundles of straw which they had strewn about its floor.[6]

The Farm.

Beside the hall stood chambers for women and the household, while around the farm-yard were stable and threshing-floor and barn. With so thin and scattered a population, and at a time when even internal trade had hardly begun to exist, the home-

[1] Bæda, H. E. iii. 10.

[2] Bæda, Vit. Cuthb. c. xxix. H. E. v. 4.

[3] For washing of guests' hands and feet see Bæda, Vit. Cuthb. c. xxix. For the banquet and drinking-bouts, Eddi. "Life of Wilfrid," c. xvi. "convivium trium dierum et noctium."

[4] For gleemen and buffoons, Beowulf, vv. 2134, *et seq.* A council at Gloucester in 747 classes among "ludicrarum artium" those of "poetarum, citharistarum, musicorum, scurrorum." Haddan and Stubbs, "Councils," iii. 369.

[5] See Cædmon's story, postea. Dunstan in later days carries his harp in his hand on visits, and loves "carmina gentilitatis" and "nænia."

[6] Beowulf, vv. 1381-1385.

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stead had to be in the main its own provider; the grain had not only to be sown and reaped but to be made into bread in the household, as the flax was not only gathered but woven into garments. To woman fell much of the outer and almost all this inner farm work. It was she who milked the kine and shore the sheep, who made the cheese and combed the wool and beat the flax; while her name of the "spinster" still reminds us how she spun the thread and wove the wool of every garment.[1] The buildings in which this work went on lay round each larger homestead; the mill for grinding the "grits" or rough corn and the finer wheat-meal,[2] the oven where the loaf was baked, common loaf, or alms loaf, or white bread of pure wheat, or raised loaf and cake,[3] the sheds for storing wool and honey and wax,[4] the malt-house and the brewery, with its bright ale, and mild ale, and smooth ale and beer,[5] the dairy with its butter and its cheese.[6] The outer work of the farm fell upon the freeman and his serfs. Ox-herd and

[1] Among the poetic names for woman was "freoðowebbe," the "weaver of peace," which reminds us of her subtler influence as reconciler in the home. Beowulf, v. 3880.

[2] Cod. Dip. 166, 226.

[3] Cod. Dip. 226, 235.

[4] Cod. Dip. 288, 313, 231-235.

[5] We hear of all these varieties as early as the seventh century as well as of Welsh ale and sweetened Welsh ale. Cod. Dip. 166, 1088. Wine may have been introduced by the Christian missionaries, but it was in use in very early times. Bæda, H. E. lib. i. c. 1.

[6] Cod. Dip. 135, 288. Ini's Laws, sec. 70; Thorpe, "Laws and Institutes," vol. i. p. 147.

cow-herd, shepherd and goat-herd, the swine-herd who drove the hogs into forest and woodland to feed on the oak-mast, the barn-man and the sower, were serfs in wealthier households, or on the estate of the lord who had gathered a township about him; but in the free townships the poorer freeman must have been his own labourer, and the toil necessitated by the system of common culture was severe. The open lands of the common pasture were often far from any homestead, so that through the long winter nights, from Martinmas to Easter, the villagers had to take their turn in folding and guarding the horses and cattle that pastured on them. The need of fencing off the common meadow into separate grass fields when the grass began to grow afresh in the spring was a yet more serious burden;[1] and beside all these the villager had to help in the maintenance of mound and ditch around the townships, as well as to be ready when occasion called to join the hue and cry in chase of stolen cattle, or to follow the reeve of his township to hundred-moot or folk-moot.

The Kin.

The dwellers in such a township were not men who had casually come together. As the blood-bond gave its form to English warfare, so it gave its form to English society. Kinsmen, as we have seen, fought side by side in the hour of battle, and the feelings of

[1] "If ceorls have a common meadow, or other partible land, to fence, and some have fenced their part, some have not, and strange cattle come in and eat up the common corn or grass, let those go who own the gap and make compensation to the others."—"Laws of Ini," iii. 42; (Thorpe's "Laws and Institutes," vol. i. p. 129.)

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honour and discipline which held the host together were drawn from the common duty of every man in each little group of warriors to his house. And as they fought side by side on the field, so they dwelt side by side on the soil. Harling abode by Harling, and Billing by Billing, and each 'wick' and 'ham' and 'stead' and 'tun' took its name from the kinsmen who dwelt together in it. In this way the house or ham of the Billings was Billingham, and the tun or township of the Harlings was Harlington.[1] The life of the individual freeman indeed was all but lost in that of the family.[2] When he was a child his kinsmen were bound by custom to watch over and guard him from wrong, even should the wrong be at his father's hand. When he wedded, it was among the kinsfolk that he had to find him sureties and witnesses. If a blood-feud sprung up, the kin were bound to give life and limb in his defence. Should he be slain, it was for them to avenge his

[1] Professor Stubbs (Const. Hist. vol. i. p. 92) says: "In England it is probable that all the primitive villages in whose name the patronymic syllable "ing" occurs, were originally colonized by communities united either really by blood or by the belief in a common descent." See, too, Kemble, "Saxons in England," vol. i. p. 234, etc., and Robertson, "Scotland under Early Kings," vol. ii. App. F. "The Kin." The settlement of these groups of kinsmen was probably determined by lot. When Cuthbert's relics found a home at Durham, the woodland around was parted in this way among the new settlers. See Sim. Dur. Hist. Dunelm. Ecc. sec. 37: "Eradicata undique silva et unicuique mansionibus sorte distributis." Larger divisions of country, such as the Rapes of Sussex, bear traces of the same mode of distribution.

[2] "Essays in Anglo-Saxon Law" (Boston, 1871), 121, *et seq.*

slaying. Order and law itself rested not on a man's personal action, but on the blood-bond that knit him to his kin. Every outrage was held to have been done by all who were linked in blood to the doer of it; every crime to have been done against all who were linked in blood to the sufferer from it. From this sense of the value of the family bond as a means of restraining the wrong-doer by forces which the tribe as a whole did not as yet possess sprang the first rude forms of English justice. The freeman's life and the freeman's limb had each its legal price.[1] "Eye for eye," and "limb for limb," ran the rough customary code, or for each fair damages. This price of life or limb, however, was paid not by the wrong-doer to the man he wronged, but by the kin or family of the wrong-doer to the kin or family of the wronged. The loss, and so the right to revenge, or to the "blood-wite" by which that right could be bought off, were the loss and the right not of the individual freeman but of his kin. Each kinsman was his kinsman's keeper, bound to protect him from wrong, to hinder him from wrong-doing, and to suffer with him and pay for him if wrong were done. So fully was this principle recognized that even if any man was charged before his fellow-tribesmen with crime his kinsfolk still remained in fact his sole judges; for it was by their solemn oath of his innocence or his guilt that he had to stand or fall.

The tie of blood, however, was widened by the

[1] "The Laws of Æthelberht," the first English writing down of customary law, are little more than a list of the fines due for harm to life and limb.

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larger tie of land. Land with the German race seems at a very early time to have become everywhere the accompaniment of full freedom.[1] The freeman was strictly the freeholder, and the exercise of his full rights as a free member of the community to which he belonged became inseparable from the possession of his 'holding' in it. But property had not as yet reached the stage of absolutely personal possession. The woodland and pasture-land of an English village were still undivided, and every free villager had the right of turning into it his cattle or swine. The meadow-land lay in like manner open and undivided from hay-harvest to spring. It was only when grass began to grow afresh that the common meadow was fenced off into grass-fields, one for each household in the village; and when hay-harvest was over fence and division were at an end again. The plough-land alone was permanently allotted in equal shares both of corn-land and fallow-land to the families of the freemen, though even the plough-land was subject to fresh division as the number of claimants grew greater or less.[2]

[1] Stubbs, Const. Hist. i. 84, 199.

[2] Stubbs, Const. Hist. i. 56, 57; and see Nasse, "Land Community of the Middle Ages," 15-30. Traces of this common culture lasted here and there to very recent times. Some thirty years ago, on the Yorkshire wolds, "each farmer owned a certain number of 'ox-gangs' (a word still to be heard now and then from the mouths of old labourers), and lines of ancient balks and plough-lands, some straight, some curiously curved, still exist in places. The common pasture or meadow was divided into portions, each of which changed hands annually, and each had cut on the turf a distinguishing mark—as an arrow, a triangle, or a circle. At the harvest feast a number of apples, each

It was this sharing in the common land which marked off the freeman or ceorl from the unfree man or læt, the tiller of land which another owned. As the ceorl was the descendant of settlers who whether from their earlier arrival or from kinship with the original settlers of the village had been admitted to a share in its land and its corporate life, so the læt was a descendant of later comers to whom such a share was denied, or in some cases perhaps of earlier dwellers from whom the land had been wrested by force of arms. In the modern sense of freedom the læt was free enough. He had house and home of his own, his life and limb were as secure as the ceorl's —save as against his lord; it is probable from what we see in later laws that as time went on he was recognized as a member of the nation, summoned to the folk-moot, allowed equal right at law, and called like the full freeman to the hosting. But he was unfree as regards lord and land. He had neither part nor lot in the common land of the village. The ground which he tilled he held of some freeman of the tribe to whom he paid rent in labour or in kind. And this man was his lord. Whatever rights the unfree villager might gain in the general social life of his fellow countrymen, he had no rights as against his lord. He could leave neither land nor lord at his

marked in a corresponding fashion to one of the 'dæls,' or divisions, were thrown into a tub of water. Each farmer then dived for an apple, and the mark which it carried indicated the 'dæl' which was to be his for the coming year. The Dolemoors in Somersetshire were managed in a similar way, save that the change was for a longer period." Murray's "Yorkshire," p. 161.

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will. He was bound to render due service to his lord in tillage or in fight. So long, however, as these services were done the land was his own. His lord could not take it from him; and he was bound to give him aid and protection in exchange for his services.[1]

The Slave.

Far different from the position of the læt was that of the slave, though there is no ground for believing that the slave class was other than a small one. It was a class which sprang mainly from debt or crime. Famine drove men to "bend their heads in the evil days for meat;" the debtor, unable to discharge his debt, flung on the ground his freeman's sword and spear, took up the labourer's mattock, and placed his head as a slave within a master's hands. The criminal whose kinsfolk would not make up his fine became a crime serf of the plaintiff or the king. Sometimes a father pressed by need sold children and wife into bondage. In any case the slave became part of the live stock of his master's estate, to be willed away at death with horse or ox, whose pedigree was kept as carefully as his own. His children were bondsmen like himself; even a freeman's children by a slave mother inherited the mother's taint. "Mine is the calf that is born of my cow," ran an English proverb. It was not indeed slavery such as we have known in modern times, for stripes and bonds were rare: if the slave was slain it was by an angry blow, not by the lash. But his master could slay him if he would; it was but a chattel the less. The slave had no place in the

[1] For Læt, see Stubbs, Const. Hist. i. 25, 52, 73, and *note*.

justice court, no kinsmen to claim vengeance or guilt-fine for his wrong. If a stranger slew him his lord claimed the damages; if guilty of wrong-doing, "his skin paid for him" under his master's lash. If he fled he might be chased like a strayed beast, and when caught he might be flogged to death. If the wrong-doer were a woman she might be burned.[1]

The Tun-Moot.

With the public life of the village however the slave had nothing, the læt in early days little, to do. In its Moot, the common meeting of its villagers for justice and government, a slave had no place or voice, while the læt was originally represented by the lord whose land he tilled. The life, the sovereignty of the settlement was solely in the body of the freemen whose holdings lay round the moot-hill or the sacred tree where the community met from time to time to order its own industry[2] and to make its own laws. Here new settlers were admitted to the freedom of the township, and bye-laws framed and headman and tithing-man chosen for its governance. Here plough-land and meadow-land were shared in due lot among the villagers, and field and homestead passed from man to man by the delivery of a turf cut from its soil. Here strife of farmer with farmer was settled according to the "customs" of the township as its elder men stated them, and four men were chosen to follow headman or ealdorman to hundred-court or war. It

[1] For the slave, see Stubbs, "Const. Hist." i. 89; Kemble, "Sax. in Engl." i. 185, etc.

[2] There is no ground for believing that the "tun-moot" was a judicial court. Its work was the ordering of the village life and the village industry; and traces of this still survive in our institutions. "The right of the markmen to determine

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is with a reverence such as is stirred by the sight of the head-waters of some mighty river that one looks back to these village-moots of Friesland or Sleswick. It was here that England learned to be a "mother of Parliaments." It was in these tiny knots of husbandmen that the men from whom Englishmen were to spring learned the worth of public opinion, of public discussion, the worth of the agreement, the "common sense," the general conviction to which discussion leads, as of the laws which derive their force from being expressions of that general conviction. A humourist of our own day has laughed at Parliaments as "talking shops," and the laugh has been echoed by some who have taken humour for argument. But talk is persuasion, and persuasion is force, the one force which can sway freemen to deeds such as those which have made England what she is. The "talk" of the village moot, the strife and judgment of men giving freely their own rede and setting it as freely aside for what they learn to be the wiser rede of other men, is the groundwork of English history.

whether a new settler should be admitted to the township exists in the form of admitting a tenant at the court baron and customary court of every manor; the right of the markmen to determine the 'bye-laws,' the local arrangement for the common husbandry, or the fencing of the hay-fields, or the proportion of cattle to be turned into the common pasture, exists still in the manorial courts and in the meetings of the townships; the very customs of relief and surrender, which are often regarded as distinctly feudal, are remnants of the polity of the time when every transfer of property required the witness of the community to whose membership the new tenant was thereby admitted." Stubbs, "Const. Hist." i. 95, 96.

CHAPTER V.

THE STRIFE OF THE CONQUERORS.

577—617.

IMPORTANT as was the battle of Deorham in marking the point of transition between the earlier age of conquest and the age of settlement which followed it, it is of hardly less importance as marking a new point of departure in the political relations of the conquerors themselves. Nothing can be more remarkable than the change which from this moment passes over their relations to the conquered people. Till now, as we have seen, the war between Englishmen and Welshmen had been a war of extermination. Eastward of the line which the English sword had drawn across the island no trace was left of Roman or of British life; and westward of it, in the half of Britain that still remained unconquered, there was no thought of submission to or intercourse with the conquerors. The force of the Roman past was seen in the attitude which the Britons preserved towards their English assailants. In our anxiety to know more of our fathers, we listen to the monotonous plaint of

English and Britons.

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Gildas with a strange disappointment. Gildas must have witnessed much of the invasion;[1] but we look in vain through his book for any account of the life or settlement of Saxon or Engle or Jute. He tells us nothing of their fortunes or of their leaders. A new people was growing up in the conquered half of Britain, but across the border of this new people Gildas gives us but a glimpse, doubtless he had but a glimpse himself, of forsaken walls, of shrines polluted with heathen impiety. His silence and ignorance mark the character which the struggle preserved up to the close of the sixth century. The Briton had been driven by the sword from much of British soil. But, beaten as he was, he yet remained unconquered. No British neck had as yet bowed in willing slavery before the English invader; and the provincials still looked down on their assailants with the scorn with which Rome had looked down on them in the very height of its power. They still held the struggle to be one of civilization against barbarism. To the Britons the English invaders remained "barbarians," "wolves," "dogs," "whelps from the kennel of barbarism," "hateful to God and to man."[2] Their victories were accepted as triumphs of the power of evil, as chastisements of a divine justice for national sin. But their ravage, terrible as it was, was held to be almost at an end; in another century, so ran Welsh

[1] His work dates from about 560, but he had quitted Britain some thirty years before.

[2] Gildas. Hist. 23: "ferocissimi illi nefandi nominis Saxones, Deo hominibusque invisi, quasi in caulas lupi . . . . grex catulorum de cubili leænæ barbariæ . . . . canum catastam."

prophecies, their last hold on the land would be shaken off.

Legend, if it distorts facts, preserves accurately enough the impressions of a vanished time; and in the legend of St. Beino we catch a glimpse of the chasm that parted the two races at this period. Beino had settled with some monkish followers in a solitary retreat in the west of our Herefordshire. "And on a certain day, as Beino was travelling near the river Severn, where was a ford, lo! he heard a voice on the other side of the river, inciting dogs to hunt a hare; the voice being that of a Saxon who spoke as loud as he could 'Cirgia' (charge), which in that language incited the dogs. And when Beino heard the voice of the Saxon, he immediately returned, and coming to his disciples said to them, 'My sons, put on your clothes and your shoes, and let us leave this place, for the nation of this man has a strange language, and is abominable, and I heard his voice on the other side of the river inciting the dogs after a hare. They have invaded this place and it will be theirs, and they will keep it in their possession.' And then Beino said to one of his disciples, Bithylint was his name, 'My son,' said he, 'be obedient to me; I wish that thou wilt remain here. My blessing shall be with thee. And the cross which I have made I will leave with thee.' And the blessing of Beino bound that disciple and he remained there. And Beino and his disciples came as far as Meivon, and there he remained with Tysilio forty days and forty nights. And from thence he came to King Cynan, son of Brochwel, and he requested a place to pray for

Beino.

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End of extermination of Britons.

his soul, and that of his friends. And the king gave to him Gwydelwerum, in Merionethshire."[1]

But with the battle of Deorham this absolute severance between the one race and the other comes almost suddenly to an end. In a few years we find the Welshmen of the west in alliance with and even fighting by the side of their assailants of the east. It is possible that its British inhabitants had never been driven from the soil which Ceawlin won in the lower Severn valley; it was at any rate but a short while after their settlement that the West-Saxon settlers in this district were leagued with the Welsh for the overthrow of Ceawlin. Such a league took a yet more marked form when Penda and the Englishmen of Mid-Britain marched side by side with Welshmen in their attack on Northumbria. Junctions such as these show that the older wars of extermination had come to an end, and that the hostility of the two races was henceforth to sink down into the common hostility of neighbouring peoples But we have more direct proof that the Britons were no longer driven from the soil by their assailants in the conquests which the Northumbrian King Æthelfrith was soon to win from the Britons of Strathclyde. "He wasted the race of the Britons more than any chieftain of the English had done," says Bæda, "for none drove out or subdued so many of the natives or won so much of their land for English settlement, or made so many

[1] "Lives of Cambro. British Saints," by Rev. W. J. Rees, p. 301. The Welsh text is given at p. 15. Like most of the Welsh hagiographies, Beino's life in its present form is of the twelfth century, but like its fellows it is clearly founded on old materials.

tributary to Englishmen."[1] The policy of accepting the submission and tribute of the Welsh, but of leaving them on the conquered soil, became, indeed, from this moment the invariable policy of the invaders; and as the invasion pushed further and further to the west an ever-growing proportion of the Britons remained mingled with the conquerors. We see this strongly brought out in one of these western districts. By a long series of victories, a series spreading over the space of a hundred and thirty years, the West-Saxons at last became masters of the country which now bears the name of Somerset, the land of the Somer-sætas. Each successive wave of invasion has left its mark in the local names of the district over which it passed; and the varying proportion of these to the Celtic or other non-English names around them throws some light on the varying character of the conquest. We may take as a rough index the well known English termination "ton." North of Mendip—in the country which had been won in the early days of West-Saxon invasion—this bears to all other names the proportion of about a third. Between Mendip and the Parrett, in the conquests of Centwine, it reaches only a fourth. Across the Parrett, but east of the road from Watchet to Wellington, the proportion decreases to a fifth; and westward of this it becomes rapidly rarer, and varies in different districts from an eighth to a tenth. In other words the British population, which had withdrawn before the sword of Ceawlin, rested in quiet subjection beneath the sword of Ine. The change is yet more strongly marked by

[1] Bæda, H. E. lib. i. c. 34.

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Ine's laws. In these the Briton is recognised as a subject of the State and as entitled to claim legal protection for life and limb.

Change in relations of conquerors.

But the battle of Deorham marked more than a change in the relation of the conquered to the conquerors. It marks a change in the relations of the conquerors themselves. From this moment the strife of Englishman and Briton, though far from having reached its close, sinks into comparative unimportance; and what plays the first part in English politics for the next two hundred years is the strife of Englishman with Englishman. However wearisome such a strife may seem, it was of vital import to the after history of the country, for it was only by hard fighting that the relative weight of the conquering peoples could be determined, and a centre of supremacy established round which the various tribes that had shared in the winning of Britain could gather into a nation. Till now no national idea had shown itself in the new England. All the kingdoms which had been built up by the invaders stood on a footing of equality. All had taken an independent share in the work of conquest. Although the oneness of a common blood and a common speech was everywhere recognised, we find no traces of any common action or common rule. Even in the two groups of kingdoms, the Engle and the Saxon kingdoms which occupied Britain south of the Humber, the relations of each member of the group to its fellow-members seem to have been merely local; it was only locally that East and West and South English were being grouped at this time round the

Middle English of Leicester, or that the East and West and South Saxons had been grouped round the Middle Saxons about London. In neither instance do we find any real trace of a confederacy, or of the rule of one member of the group over the others; while north of the Humber the feeling between the Engle of Yorkshire and the Engle who had settled towards the Firth of Forth was a feeling of hostility rather than friendship. But with the conquests of Ceawlin this age of isolation, of equality, of independence, came to an end. The progress of the conquest had in fact drawn a sharp line between the kingdoms of the conquerors. The work of half of them was done. In the south of the island not only Kent, but Sussex, Essex, and Middlesex, were surrounded by English territory, and hindered by that single fact from all further growth. In central Britain the same fate necessarily befell the East-English, the South-English, and the Middle-English. The West-Saxons on the other hand, and the West-English, or Mercians, still remained free to conquer and expand on the south of the Humber, as the Englishmen of Deira and Bernicia remained free to the north of that river. It was plain therefore that from this moment the growth and strength of these powers would throw their fellow kingdoms into the background, and that with an ever-growing inequality of power must come a new arrangement of political forces. The greater kingdoms would in the end be drawn to subject and absorb the lesser ones, and to the war between Englishman and Briton would be added a struggle between Englishman and Englishman.

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The West-Saxon State.

It was through this struggle, and the establishment of a lordship on the part of the stronger and growing states over their weaker and stationary fellows in which it resulted, that the English kingdoms were to make their first step towards union in a single England; and from the time we have reached the struggle became inevitable. Masters of the larger and richer portion of the land, the invaders were no longer drawn irresistibly westward by the hope of plunder, while the severance of the British kingdoms lightened the pressure of a common danger from without. Greed and terror alike ceased to hold the invaders together, and Saxon and Engle turned from the work of conquest to fight for lordship over the land they had won. At the moment of Ceawlin's victory such a lordship seemed to fall necessarily to the lot of Wessex. No king could vie as a conqueror with the king who had fought and won at Barbury Hill, at Wimbledon, and at Deorham.[1] None of its fellow kingdoms seemed likely to hold their own against a state that stretched from the Channel to the Ouse and from the Chilterns to the mouth of the Severn. Only one success more, in fact, was needed to raise such a power into supremacy over the whole English people. A march on the upper Severn

[1] At Barbury Hill Ceawlin had shared the victory with Cynric (Engl. Chron. a. 556). The victory at Bedford had been won by his brother Cuthwulf. It is this commanding position of Ceawlin that Bæda marks in setting him in the list of those who exercised an "imperium" over other Englishmen; Ælla of the South-Saxons, Ceawlin, Æthelberht of Kent, Rædwald of East-Anglia, and the Northumbrian kings, Eadwine, Oswald, and Oswiu. (Bæda, H. E. ii. c. 5.) But see postea, p. 306, *note*.

BRITAIN IN 580.
Scale of Miles.
0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70
Strathclyde Britons
BERNICIANS
DEIRANS
Cumbrians
Chester
Pecsætan
Lindsey
WARA
LINDS
North Folk
EAST ENGLE
South Folk
West Engle
Middle Engle
North Gyrwas
South Engle
S.Gyrwas
Hwiccas
Magonsætan
Wrocensætan
EAST SAXONS
Middle Sexe
Surrey
KENT
Dorcham
WEST SAXONS
Wilsætan
SOUTH SAXONS
Sumor
Sealwoda
North Welsh
West Wales
Stanford's Geograph! Estab!

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valley and the winning of Chester would utterly crush the resistance of the Britons; for it would cut off the Cumbrians from the central districts of our Wales, as Deorham had already cut off the Welsh of Somerset, Devon, and Cornwall, and thus break what had been Britain into three isolated districts which could oppose no common or national resistance to their assailants. But the result of such a conquest would be almost as decisive on the political aspect of the new England itself. With a border that stretched from the Fens round to the head-waters of the Trent the pressure of the West-Saxons on central Britain would have been irresistible. The scattered settlers who were dotted over Northamptonshire, the invaders who were hardly camped along the basin of the Trent, the peoples of the eastern coast from the Humber to the Thames, would have been powerless to resist Ceawlin's supremacy, while the strength of the Deirans and of the Bernicians was being drained at this crisis by a long and obstinate war which these tribes were waging against one another in the border-lands of the Wear. Neither to the south nor to the north of the Humber was there any state save Kent that could have withstood the West-Saxons; and, alone, even Kent could not have held its own.

Uriconium.

We can hardly doubt that it was the sense of these issues that drew Ceawlin to push, in 583, only six years after his victory at Deorham, up the course of the Severn. Marching through the forest-belt that stretched from Arden across the north of our Worcestershire, a belt whose fragments preserve the name of the forest of Wyre, the King reached

Uriconium,[1] a town whose name we recognize in its district of the "Wrekin," and whose ruins have been recently brought to light. The town was strongly placed at the base of the Wrekin, not far from the bank of Severn, and was of great extent. Its walls inclosed a space more than double that of Roman London, while the remains of its forum, its theatre, and its amphitheatre, as well as the broad streets which contrast so strangely with the narrow alleys of other British towns,[2] show its wealth and importance. But with its storm by the West-Saxons the very existence of the city came to an end. Its ruins show that the place was plundered and burned, while the bones which lie scattered among them tell their tale of the flight and massacre of its inhabitants, of women and children hewn down in the streets, and wretched fugitives stifled in the hypocausts whither they had fled with their little hoards for shelter.[3] A British poet in verses still left to us sings piteously the death-song of Uriconium, "the white town in the valley," the town of white stones gleaming among the green woodlands. The torch of the foe had left

[1] For a translation of Llywarch Hen's elegy on Kyndylan, a discussion of its historical relation to this inroad, and an identification of its "Tren" with Uriconium, see Guest, "Conquest of Severn Valley" ("Archæol. Journ." vol. xix.), pp. 199-215. For the ruins of Uriconium, see Wright, "Guide to Uriconium, 1859." On one wall were found two lines scrawled in the plaster, which would have been invaluable for a knowledge of Roman Britain. Unluckily they were destroyed, but it is noteworthy that they were in Latin. (Ibid. p. 46.)

[2] Wright, "Uriconium," p. 48.

[3] Wright, "Uriconium," pp. 40, 41.

it when he sang a heap of blackened ruins where the singer wandered through halls he had known in happier days, the halls of its chief Kyndylan, "without fire, without light, without song," their stillness broken only by the eagle's scream, the eagle "who has swallowed fresh drink, heart's blood of Kyndylan the fair."

Defeat of Faddiley.

But with the fall of Uriconium, the firing of Pengwyrn,[1] in its loop of the upper Severn, and the wreck of "Bassa's churches," perhaps a group of small chapels such as we still find at Glendalough, and which may have left their name to the little village of Baschurch,[2] the success of the West-Saxons reached its close. From this point the aim of their raid must have been Chester; but as Ceawlin pushed from Uriconium up the Severn to the head-waters of the Weaver, he was met at a spot called Faddiley,[3] on what was possibly the border of the city territory, as it is still that of our Cheshire, by a British force which had gathered under Brocmael, a chieftain whose dominion may have roughly answered to the later Powys.[4] From the "wrath" with which Ceawlin fell back into his own country, as well as the events that followed, the battle must have ended in a

[1] Pengwyrn occupied the site of our Shrewsbury.

[2] See Llywarch Hen's elegy, "Pengwyrn's palace: is it not in flames," and for Bassa, vv. 46-51. (Guest, "Conquest of Severn Valley," pp. 204 9.) Baschurch lies to the north of Shrewsbury.

[3] Engl. Chron. a. 584. For the identity of its "Fethan-Leag" with Faddiley, see Guest, "Conquest of Severn Valley," p. 196-9. It is some three miles west of Nantwich.

[4] Guest, "Conq. of Severn Valley," 215.

terrible defeat of the Gewissas. The blow proved fatal to the power of Wessex. Not only was the upper Severn valley lost as quickly as it had been won;[1] but the loss was followed by a rising of those Gewissas, the Hwiccas as they were called, who had settled in the newly conquered country along the lower Severn;[2] and who now took for their king Ceol or Ceolric,[3] the son of Cutha, a brother of Ceawlin, who had fallen in the rout at Faddiley.[4]

Battle of Wanborough.

With the rising of the Hwiccas began a struggle for the throne between the lines of Cutha and Ceawlin, which broke the strength of Wessex for more than two hundred years. The first encounter indeed between the two houses showed how thoroughly the kingdom was rent in twain. The revolt in the Severn valley had thrown Ceawlin back on the older Wessex; and it is there that when Ceolric marched to attack him in 591 we find the king

[1] I am afraid I differ here from Dr. Guest and Mr. Freeman. But the point seems clear when we compare the lower with the upper valley of the Severn. Both in later days became Mercian ground. But the country of the Hwiccas retains to this day its West-Saxon dialect, while north of the Forest of Wyre the tongue is Mercian. Had this upper district been a West-Saxon settlement conquered by Mercians, I see no reason why its dialect should have differed from that of the West-Saxon lands conquered by Mercia on the lower Severn.

[2] I gather this from the point at which Ceawlin takes post against the rebels, as well as from their junction with "Britons" against him. See postea.

[3] Engl. Chron. a. 590. Malmesbury (G. R. i. sec. 17) identifies its "Ceol" with Ceolric.

[4] Engl. Chron. c. 584, "There was Cutha slain."

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encamped at Wanborough,[1] on the brink of the Wiltshire Downs, where their steep escarpment rears itself above the Vale of White Horse. The height was no doubt crowned with the mound or barrow from which its name is drawn, the barrow of Woden, the god from whom the kings of Wessex believed their race to spring; and its sacred character may have backed its advantages as a military position. For Wanborough was the key of Ceawlin's shrunken realm.[2] So long as he held the post, the old king could communicate by Roman roads with Winchester and Old Sarum; another road ran by Silchester to the regions south of Thames which he had won at Wimbledon; while reinforcements from the district of the Four Towns could reach him by the Icknield Way which ran along the edge of the downs on which he stood It was this that made his overthrow a decisive one. After a terrible slaughter the day went against Ceawlin;[3] he was driven from his realm, and perished two years after, it may be in some effort to regain his throne.[4] The battle of Wanborough marks, as we have seen, a new stage

[1] Engl. Chron. a. 591. Guest (Welsh and English in Somerset, Archæol. Journ. xvi. 106, 107) fixes this "Wodnes beorge" at Wanborough. Malmesbury (G. R. i. 17) attributes the rising to the hatred felt towards Ceawlin ("quia enim in odium sui quasi classicum utrobique cecinerat"), but does not give its causes.

[2] Guest, "Welsh and English in Somerset," Archæol. Journ. xvi. 107.

[3] Engl. Chron. a. 591. "There was great slaughter at Wanborough, and Ceawlin was driven out."

[4] Engl. Chron. a. 593.

in the relations of Welshmen and Englishmen. At Faddiley the Britons had reappeared on the scene of our history as a vigorous fighting power. At Wanborough, it was their junction with the Hwiccas that struck down Ceawlin, for Britons marched side by side with the Hwiccas in the host of Ceolric.[1] But the battle marks no less a new stage in the history of the

West-Saxons. The house of Cutha, which this alliance had seated on the throne,[2] had at once to pay the price of a policy which had brought the Welshmen

[1] Malmesbury (G. R. i. sec. 17), "Conspirantibus tam Anglis quam Britonibus apud Wodnesdic cæso exercitu."

[2] It retained it till 685, when Ceawlin's line again recovered the kingdom under Cædwalla and Ine, and, after a fresh interruption, finally made it its own in Ecgberht.

into Wessex. After a few years Ceolric was succeeded by his brother Ceolwulf;[1] but the reign of Ceolwulf was one long fight with Englishmen and Britons; and it was while Wessex was thus battling for very life that the primacy among the conquerors was suddenly seized by a rival whom she had struck down some thirty years before.

Æthelberht of Kent.

The effort of the Kentishmen to break out of their narrow bounds had been foiled by Ceawlin at Wimbledon: and their boy-king had fallen back on his petty realm only to watch the rise of his conqueror to a yet greater power over Britain. But Æthelberht had never ceased to aim at a wider sway; and his ambition may have been quickened by a marriage that linked him with one of the greatest states of the Continent. From its geographical position as well as its long peace, it was natural that Kent should be the first of the English states to renew that intercourse with the body of western Christendom which had been broken by the conquest of the Saxon Shore. In the reign of the Emperor Justinian, at some time therefore between 527 and 565 (or shortly before Æthelberht's accession), "men of the English" had been sent with his own envoys by one of the Frankish kings of Gaul to Constantinople; and their presence at the Imperial Court was welcomed there as a proof that the island of Britain still owned the rule of the Cæsars.[2] We can hardly doubt from the

[1] Engl. Chron. a. 597. "He fought and contended incessantly with Angel-cyn, or with Walas, or with Peohtas, or with Scottas." I cannot explain the appearance here of "Picts and Scots."

[2] Procopius, De Bell. Goth. iv. 20. Freeman, "Norman Conquest," i. 30.

date of this visit that these Englishmen were men of the Cant-wara, the one English folk which was fairly settled in Britain at so early a time; while their presence in the train of these Frankish envoys points to some recognition by the Kentishmen of the supremacy of their Frankish neighbours, whose power must have seemed overwhelming at this time to the struggling invaders of Britain. Such a connexion would at any rate explain the marriage of Æthelberht with Bertha, a daughter of the Frankish king, Charibert.[1] The marriage was in itself a significant one. If, as seems probable, it took place in the years that immediately followed the battle of Faddiley,[2] it may have marked the awakening of larger aims in the Kentish king as he saw the great obstacle to his ambition crumble into ruin. Nor was it less important in its results: for it not only linked the fortunes of the new England with those of the German states which were growing up upon the wreck of Roman Gaul,[3] but was fated in the end to knit her again to the general fortunes of Western Christendom.

[1] Greg. Turon. Hist Eccl. lib. iv. c. 26.

[2] Æthelberht's marriage lies, of course, between the battle of Wimbledon and Augustine's arrival (568-595). Bertha's father, Charibert, became king in 561, and as Bertha seems to have been born soon after her father's accession (Greg. Turon. lib. iv. c. 21), the marriage, assuming her to be about twenty when it took place, lies at about 583, or a little later. It may have followed Fethanlea in 584. Professor Stubbs (Dict. Christ. Biogr. i. 316) thinks it was probably after the death of her mother, Ingoberg, in 589. (Greg. Turon. Hist. Eccl. lib. ix. c. 26.)

[3] The connexion with Frankish Gaul, however, cannot have been a very close one, for Gregory of Tours (Hist. Eccl. lib. ix.

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Canterbury.

The home to which Æthelberht brought his Frankish wife was the first Teutonic town which we know to have arisen on the soil of the new England. Its conquerors had hitherto followed the bent of their race in leaving the cities they had won to ruin and to solitude, and in settling in "tun" or "thorpe" in the country about them. But by Æthelberht's day the Kentish kings had fixed one of their homes just outside the north-eastern wall of Durovernum; and some of the Cant-wara had drawn into a little "byryg" or borough round the dwelling of their king. From this first Cant-wara-byryg, or Canterbury, they crept forward over the site of the ruined town. How utter a wreck Durovernum had become in the century since its fall, we see by comparing the ground-plan of the Roman city with that of the city which thus sprang up on its site. Though the continued existence of its Roman walls forced the settlers to build their houses in lines that led, like those of the Roman burghers, from gate to gate, yet the line of these thoroughfares was not adjusted to that of the Roman streets, nor were the sites of the Roman houses taken for those of the later dwellings. The wreck of the Roman houses indeed is found buried so deep beneath the soil of the English Canterbury that they must have sunk into ruins long before the Cant-wara found a home in Durovernum. Even then it was very gradually that the new borough crept forward from the king's "tun" over the site of its predecessor; and the dedications of its churches, marking as they do the date of the

c. 26) speaks of Bertha as married by "in Cantiâ regis cujusdam filius," whose name he clearly did not know.

parishes in which they were raised, show that the whole area within the walls was not filled up till the days of Dunstan and Eadgar.[1]

Æthelberht's supremacy.

But even the stimulus of Bertha's marriage could hardly have spurred Æthelberht to a renewal of his efforts, had not the sudden ruin of Wessex left the field open to his arms. British soil indeed there was no longer any that he could win; but about him lay English neighbours who might be forced to own his supremacy. We know nothing of the marches or battles by which the Kentish king asserted his sway; but in the six years that followed the battle of Wanborough, Æthelberht raised Kent into one of the great powers of Britain.[2] Even in Wessex his power was owned as that of a neighbour whose safe-conduct was sufficient to protect men in passing through the very heart of Ceolwulf's realm.[3] But elsewhere he bowed his neighbours more directly under his sway. Even the South-Saxons were not sheltered by their screen of woodland and fen from the grasp of the conqueror.[4] But across the Thames Æthelberht found an easier prey; and in 597 his "empire," to use Bæda's word, already spread along the eastern coast as far as to the banks of the Humber.[5] He was overlord of

[1] See Fausset's "Canterbury before Domesday," Archæol. Journ. vol. xxxii.

[2] Bæda (H. E. ii. 5) shows that his supremacy was established by 597.

[3] Bæda, H. E. ii. 2. "Adjutorio usus Ædilbercti regis convocavit (Augustinus) ad suum colloquium episcopos sive doctores proximæ Brittonum provinciæ . . . in confinio Hwicciorum et Occidentalium Saxonum."

[4] Malm. Gest. Pontif. (Script. post. Bæd. p. 133).

[5] Bæda, H. E. i. 25. "Ad confinium usque Humbræ fluminis

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the East-Saxons, whose king was wedded to his sister Ricula.[1] The East-Saxon kingdom, it must be remembered, comprised Hertfordshire and Middlesex as well as Essex itself; and London also passed under his sway with the men who had so recently won it.[2] Northward of the Colne his supremacy extended not only over the East-Anglians under their king Rædwald, but "over all the countries of the Southern-Engle which are parted from the Engle of the North by the Humber, and by the border-lands in the neighbourhood of the Humber."[3] His border-line thus ran along the Humber and across the great swamp of the Trent to Sherwood, across the valleys of the Derwent and the Dove by Needwood to the water-parting which formed the "march" of the Mercians, then bending round through Arden it followed the western and southern borders of Northamptonshire to the borders of the Gyrwas beside Huntingdon, and struck by the Devil's Dyke and the great woodlands to the western part of Hertfordshire, to the Thames, to Sussex, and the sea.

English slaves at Rome.

That this supremacy of Æthelberht was no mere accident, but the result of forces which were acting

maximi, quo meridiani et septentrionales Anglorum populi dirimuntur, fines imperii tetenderat."

[1] Bæda, H. E. ii. 3. "In qua gente Saberct, nepos Ædilberct i ex sorore Riculâ, regnabat." Sledda was Saberct's father (Florence of Worcester ed. Thorpe. Geneal. app. ad vol. i. 250).

[2] Bæda, H. E. ii. 3. "Fecit rex Ædelberctus in civitate Lundonia ecclesiam."

[3] Bæda, H. E. ii. 5. "*Cunctis* australibus eorum (Anglorum) provinciis quæ Humbræ fluvio et contiguis ei terminis sequestrantur a borealibus imperavit."

Stanford's Geographical Estab.

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universally throughout the new England, is seen in the fact that the years in which it was built up saw the rise of a power hardly inferior to that of Kent on the north of the Humber. Under the rule of their king Ælla, the Engle of Deira are said not only to have made themselves masters of the country from the Humber to the Wear, but to have taken advantage of the discord in Bernicia to assert a supremacy over their fellow Engle to the north.[1] If this were so, we find the origin of a struggle between the two peoples in Ælla's old age which filled the foreign slave markets with English slaves.[2] Nothing marks more strongly the chasm of thought and feeling that in spite of oneness in tongue, blood, and religion, still parted the English tribes from one another than the cruel usages of their warfare. A war between two English peoples was carried on with all the ruthlessness of a war between strangers. It was purely at his captor's will that ransom saved the noble taken in battle from the doom of death. Slavery alone saved from death a captive of meaner rank. At a far later time than this, when the influence of Christianity had done much to soften

[1] Skene, "Celtic Scotland," i. 155-6.

[2] The date of Gregory's meeting with the English slaves at Rome is fixed between 585 and 588 by the fact that after his long stay at Constantinople he returned to Rome in 585 or 586 (Pelagius wrote to him at Constantinople in October 584, while a letter of Pelagius to Elias in 586 is said to have been composed by Gregory at Rome). On the other hand Ælla, whom the slaves owned as their king, died in 588.

English manners, the slaying of prisoners in cold blood or their sale in foreign slave markets remained a common matter.[1] One of the most memorable stories in our history shows us a group of such slaves, taken in this war between the Bernicians and Deirans, as they stood in the market-place at Rome, it may be the great Forum of Trajan which still in its decay recalled the glories of the Imperial City. Their white bodies, their fair faces, their golden hair were noted by a Roman deacon who passed by.[2] "From what country do these slaves come?" Gregory asked the trader who brought them. The slave-dealer answered, "They are English" (or as the word ran in the Latin form it would bear at Rome) "they are Angles." The deacon's pity vented itself in poetic humour. "Not Angles but Angels," he said, "with faces so angel-like." "From what country come they?" "They come," said the merchant, "from Deira." "De ira," was the untranslatable word-play of the vivacious Roman, "ay, plucked from God's ire and called to Christ's mercy! And what is the name of their king?" They told him "Ælla;" and Gregory again seized on this word as of good omen. "Alleluia shall be sung in Ælla's land," he said, and passed on

1 See the tale in Bæda, H. E. lib. iv. c. 22.

2 Such was his actual position in the Roman hierarchy, but Gregory was already the virtual director of the Papacy. He was, in fact, one of the seven "regionary deacons" of Rome, had been despatched by the popes Benedict I. and Pelagius II. as their envoy for some years at the Imperial court of Constantinople, and in a more personal capacity was Abbot of the religious house he had founded on the Cælian.

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musing how the "angel-faces" should be brought to sing it.[1]

Creation of Northumbria.

While Gregory was thus playing with Ælla's name the old king passed away; and with his death in 588 the strength of Deira seems suddenly to have broken down.[2] As the Bernician king, Æthelric, entered Deira in triumph the children of Ælla fled over its western border, while their land passed under the lordship of its conqueror. It was from the union of the two realms which his inroad and rule brought about that a new kingdom sprang which embraced them both, the kingdom of the Northumbrians. The supremacy of Æthelric was thus of a closer and more direct sort than that of Æthelberht; for while the Kentish king was content to rule over peoples who retained their own kingly stock and political unity, the king of Bernicia was striving to establish a direct rule over Deiran as well as Bernician, and to blend the political life of both peoples into a single realm. Different however as the character of the two lordships might be, they were parts of the same movement towards a larger unity; and with their rise the aspect of the conquered Britain was suddenly changed. Instead of a chaos of isolated peoples, its conquerors were gathered into three great groups, whose existence remained the key to the history of the country during the next two hundred years. The kingdom of the north had reached what remained its final limits from the Forth to the Humber. The southern kingdom of the West-Saxons

[1] Bæda, H. E. ii. 1.

[2] E. Chron. a. 588. For the chronology of these events, see Hussey's edition of Bæda, H. E. p. 99, note.

stretched from the line of Watling Street to the coast of the Channel. And between these was already roughly sketched out the great kingdom of Mid-Britain, which, however its limits might vary in this quarter or that, retained a substantial identity both of character and of area from the days of Æthelberht to the final fall of the Mercian kings.

Augustine.

When Æthelfrith, on the death of Æthelric, became king of Northumbria, in 593, this threefold division of Britain must have been fairly established; and of its three powers that of Æthelberht was the widest and the most important. The fame of it indeed crossed the seas, and woke to fresh life the mission projects which had never ceased to stir in the mind of Gregory from the day when he pitied the English slaves in the market-place of Rome. Only three or four years after his converse with them in the Forum Gregory became bishop of the Imperial city,[1] and thus found himself in a position to carry out his dream of winning back Britain to the faith. The marriage of Bertha with the Kentish king, and the rule which Æthelberht had since established over a large part of the island afforded him the opening he sought; and after cautious negotiation with the Frankish rulers of Gaul[2] who promised to guard his missionaries on their way, and to provide them with interpreters, Gregory sent a Roman abbot, Augustine, at the head of a band of monks to preach the Gospel to the English people. The missionaries landed in 597 on the spot where Hengest had landed more

[1] In 590.

[2] Haddan and Stubbs, "Councils," iii. 10.

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than a century before in the isle of Thanet; and the interpreters whom they had chosen among the Franks were at once sent to the king with news of their arrival, as well as with promises of things strange to his ears, of joys without end and a kingdom for ever in heaven.

His arrival in Kent.

Æthelberht cannot have been taken by surprise. He had married Bertha on the condition that she should remain a Christian; her chaplain, Bishop Liudhard, formed a part of the Kentish court; and a ruined church now known as that of St. Martin outside the new Canterbury had been given him for his worship. Negotiations with Bertha and with the king himself had probably preceded the landing of Augustine; and after a few days' delay Æthelberht crossed into Thanet to confer with the new comers. They found him sitting in the open air on the chalk down above Minster,[1] where the eye now-a-days catches miles away over the marshes the dim tower of Canterbury; and the king listened patiently to the sermon of Augustine as the interpreters whom the abbot had brought with him rendered it in the English tongue. "Your words are fair," he answered at last with English good sense; "but they are new and of doubtful meaning." For himself, he said, he refused to forsake the gods of his fathers; but with the usual religious tolerance of the German race he promised shelter and protection to the strangers within his own king's tun. The band of monks entered Canterbury bearing before them a silver cross with a picture of Christ, and singing in concert the strains

[1] For fear of magic: Bæda, H. E. i. 25.

of the litany of their Church. "Turn from this city, O Lord," they sang, "Thine anger and wrath, and turn it from Thy holy house, for we have sinned." And then in strange contrast came the jubilant cry of the older Hebrew worship—the cry which Gregory had wrested in prophetic earnestness from the name of the Yorkshire king in the Roman market-place, "Alleluia." [1]

Its results.

It was thus that the spot which witnessed the landing of Hengest became yet better known as the landing-place of Augustine. But the second landing at Ebbsfleet was in no small measure a reversal and undoing of the first. "Strangers from Rome" [2] was the title with which the missionaries first fronted the English king. The march of the monks as they chanted their solemn litany was in one sense a return of the Roman legions who withdrew at the trumpet-call of Alaric. It was to the tongue and the thought not of Gregory only but of the men whom his own Jutish fathers had slaughtered and driven over sea that Æthelberht listened in the preaching of Augustine. Canterbury, the earliest city-centre of the new England,[3] became the centre of Latin influence. The Roman tongue became again one of the tongues of Britain, the language of its worship, its correspondence, its literature. But more than the tongue of Rome returned with Augustine. Practically his

[1] Bæda, H. E. i. c. 25.

[2] "Mittens ad Ædelberctum (Augustinus) mandavit se venisse de Româ."—Bæda, H. E. i. c. 25.

[3] "Dedit eis mansionem in civitate Doruvernensi, quæ imperii sui totius erat metropolis."—Bæda, H. E. i. 25.

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landing renewed that union with the Western world which the landing of Hengest had all but destroyed. The new England was admitted into the older commonwealth of nations. The civilization, arts, letters, which had fled before the sword of the English conquerors returned with the Christian faith. The fabric of the Roman law indeed never took root in England, but it is impossible not to recognize the influence of the Roman missionaries in the fact that codes of the customary English law began to be put into writing soon after their arrival.[1] Of yet greater import was the weight which the new faith was to exercise on the drift of the English towards national unity. It was impossible for England to become Christian without seeing itself organized and knit together into a single life by its Christian organization, without seeing a great national fabric of religious order rise up in the face of its civil disorder.

Gregory's plans.

As yet however these issues of the new faith were still distant. For some years indeed after the landing of the missionaries on the shores of Thanet, there was little to promise any extension of Christianity beyond the limits of Kent. After a short time indeed Æthelberht listened to the preaching of the missionaries,[2] and thousands of Kentish men crowded

[1] Æthelberht's laws are the first written code we possess. "Qui inter cætera bona, quæ genti suæ consulendo conferebat, etiam decreta illi judiciorum, juxta exempla Romanorum, cum consilio sapientium constituit; quæ conscripta Anglorum sermone hactenus habentur et observantur ab ea."—Bæda, H. E. lib. ii. c. 5.

[2] Bæda, H. E. i. 26. His conversion seems to have been in the year of Augustine's landing, 597; cf. Bæda, H. E. ii. 5.

to baptism in the train of their chief.[1] Augustine, who had as yet used Bertha's church of St. Martin for his worship,[2] now received from the king the gift of another ruined church beside the city as the seat of his bishoprick, and founded there the "Christ Church" which still remains the metropolitan church of the English Communion; while to the eastward of Canterbury rose an abbey of St. Peter and St. Paul, the patron saints of his own Rome, in which Augustine and his successors sate as abbots, and where the Kentish kings found from that time a burial-place. But if the conversion of Kent satisfied the zeal of Augustine, it was far from satisfying the larger aims of Pope Gregory. Four years after the reception of his missionaries it seemed to the Roman bishop that the time had come for widening the little church in Kent into a church of Britain; and in 601 fresh envoys from Rome brought with them a plan for the ecclesiastical organization of the whole island.[3] It was characteristic of the conservative temper of the Roman chancery, as well as a proof of the utter ignorance of the country which prevailed across the Channel, that the plan was drafted on the model of Britain as it had existed under the Romans, and took no count of the changes which had been wrought by its conquest. In Roman Britain, London and York had been the

[1] Gregory, writing in 598, rejoices that at the past Christmas "plus quam decem millia Angli ab eodem nunciati sunt fratre (Augustino) et coepiscopo nostro baptizari."—Stubbs and Haddan, "Councils," iii. p. 12.

[2] Bæda, H. E. lib. i. c. 26.

[3] See the letter—as dated—in Bæda, H. E. i. 29.

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leading cities; and it was London and York that Gregory took as the new ecclesiastical centres of the island. Augustine was to be Bishop of London, with twelve suffragans in the south. He was to send another bishop to York, who, as soon as Northern Britain became Christian, was in turn to ordain twelve suffragans for himself, and to be of equal rank with Augustine's successors. Time was to modify this programme; but its very existence was significant. It was plain that if Britain became Christian, its conversion to the new faith would bring with it a new organization of the whole country; and that the form which its religious life must assume would lead to a reconstruction of the forms which its civil life had hitherto taken.

The Britons.

But urgent as was Gregory's appeal, Æthelberht was slow to use his overlordship as a means of forcing the peoples beneath his sway to bow to the new faith which he and his people had embraced. Even Augustine seems for the moment to have preferred the easier enterprise—as it seemed—of placing the Kentish church in connexion with the Christianity which, as he had by this time learned, existed in the west of Britain. His journey "with the aid of King Æthelberht" across the territory of the West-Saxons to the border-line of the Hwiccas,[1] and the conference with

[1] Bæda, H. E. lib. ii. c. ii. The place of conference was "in confinio Hwicciorum et occidentalium Saxonum." It is generally put at Aust Passage on the Severn; but if these words, as I believe, are rightly rendered, "on the border *between* the Hwiccas and West-Saxons," this is out of the question; and we must look rather to some such place as the later Malmesbury, near

the Welsh clergy which followed, bring us for the first time into personal contact with what remained of the British race. As yet our glimpses of the Britons since the landing of Hengest have been scant and dim; and we learn to prize even the meagre jottings in which the chronicle of the conquerors tells us of their advance over Britain, as we turn to the thick darkness which during this period overspreads the story of the British defence. How stubborn that defence had been, the very length of the struggle has told us. To tear the Saxon Shore from the grasp of its defenders was a work of fifty years; and even when the Saxon Shore was lost, when its cities had become heaps of charred ruins, when the fortresses which had so long held the pirates at bay from the Wash to the Solent were but squares of broken and desolate walls, the country at large retained its cohesion, and faced its foes as stubbornly as before. Driven as they were from their first line of defence, the Britons fell back on an inner line, whose natural features presented yet more formidable obstacles to their assailants, and the island as a whole remained untouched by the English sword. The next seventy years saw even the bulk of Britain reft from them. But throughout the long fight the British resistance remained as stubborn as ever. The conquest of Yorkshire, of the southern downs, and of

this border, yet still British ground. It is clear that the Hwiccas and West-Saxons were still, as in Ceawlin's day, politically distinct, and we have seen that at that time Welsh and Hwiccas were allied. If this alliance went on, the presence of Welsh clergy in this border-line is easily accounted for.

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the valley of the Thames, though they shook the province more roughly, failed to break it up; for in the forests of Wyre and of Arden the Britons held out doggedly against the Saxon, while the fastnesses of Charnwood and Sherwood held at bay the invaders of the Trent valley. And now that even Mid-Britain was gone, and that the provincials of the south-west had been cut off from the general body of their race, the Britons still faced the West-Saxons along the lower Severn, still held the Mercians at bay along the head waters of the Trent, while along the dark range of moors from Elmet to Selkirk they barred the advance of the Deirans and Bernicians of the north.

Their disorganization.

But long before this point in the strife was reached the contest had told fatally on their political and social condition. In the unconquered part of Britain indeed the war had produced results almost as great as in the conquered. Severed from connexion with the Empire or with the rest of Europe, broken by defeats, wasted by incessant forays, what remained of the province lost little by little even the semblance of unity. The disorganization which had begun in the strife of the native and Romanized parties cannot but have widened as time went on. In the more remote and uncivilized parts of the province west of the Yorkshire moorlands and the Severn, in what was afterwards called Cumbria or the district from the Clyde to the Dee, in the country which now answers to Wales, Devon, and Cornwall, the native party definitely got the upper hand,[1] while

[1] This is shown by the list of princes in the "Epistola" of Gildas, cc. 1-8.

in Mid-Britain the Romanized cities may have retained their supremacy. But everywhere there was the same fatal tendency to faction and severance. Save at moments of utter peril no one chieftain united the native tribes under his sway; no one city or league of cities gathered the towns around it. A crowd of petty princes jostled and battled over the surface of the west; while each town isolated itself within its own district of subject country and only joined its immediate neighbours for defence on the approach of the Englishmen.

Augustine and the Britons.

In this political chaos the old Roman civilization died slowly away. History and tradition alike represent the chiefs of the west as having sunk into utter barbarians. In the district which they ruled order and law had well-nigh disappeared in an outbreak of greed, of bloodshed, and of lust, against which a Christianity that was fast sinking into mere superstition, and that seems to have been threatened for a while by apostasy, battled in vain. A chaos, at once political and religious, such as this gave little chance of welcome to a stranger, Christian though he were, who suddenly came from the midst of the conquerors, and under the protection of an English king, to claim communion with the Welsh, and to call on them to unite in preaching the gospel to their English foes. Augustine found, indeed, more obstacles than mere national hate. So little did the Roman missionaries know of the country to which they had been sent,[1]

[1] Augustine's successor, Laurentius, owned that he and his fellow-missionaries came to Britain without any knowledge of the island. "Dum nos sedes apostolica . . . in his occiduis

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that it was as a surprise that they found themselves confronted by Christians whose usages were in some ways not their own, who above all celebrated Easter at a different season,[1] and who in their horror at these differences refused not only to eat with the Roman priests, but even to take their meals in the same house with them.[2] A miracle, which Augustine believed himself to have wrought, failed to convince the Welsh of their errors in these matters; and when seven of their bishops, with monks and scholars from the great abbey at Bangor by the Dee, assembled at the place of conference, a place which still in Bæda's day preserved its name of "Augustine's Oak," they were in no humour for hearkening to his claims on their obedience as Archbishop. The story ran that they consulted a solitary as to their course. "Let the stranger arrive first," replied the hermit; "if then he rise at your approach, hear him submissively as one meek and lowly and who has taken on him the yoke of Christ. But if he rise not at your coming, and despise you, let him also be despised of you." Augustine failed to rise: and the conference broke off with threats from the Roman missionaries that if the Britons would not join in peace with their brethren, they should be warred upon by their enemies.[3]

partibus ad prædicandum gentibus paganis dirigeret, atque in hanc insulam, quæ Britannia nuncupatur, contigit introisse antequam cognosceremus; credentes quod juxta morem universalis ecclesiæ ingrederentur, in magna reverentiæ sanctitatis tam Brittones quam Scottos venerati sumus." (Bæda, H. E. ii. iv.)

[1] We shall have to deal later on with these differences.

[2] See Dagan's refusal, Bæda, H. E. ii. cap. 4.

[3] Bæda, H. E. ii. 2.

The conference at Augustine's Oak is memorable as the opening of a conflict between the two great branches of the Western Church, the Celtic and the Roman, which was to be fought out in many lands, but nowhere with more violence than in the new England. But to the Britons who took part in it, it had probably little religious significance. Their horror at the variance of usages, their resentment at the claims on their obedience, only gave an edge to their indignation at being called on to join in a work of conversion which of itself recognized the English as permanent masters of the soil they had won. At no moment indeed could they have been less inclined to such a recognition; for the time at which Augustine appeared before them was a time of national revival. To Gildas, as to every man of his race, the success of the invader had seemed due to the political disorganization among the British themselves, to the moral disorganization which accompanied it, and to the absence of any common and national resistance which followed from this disorganization. But the very triumphs of the English had done something to restore political unity to the chaos which called itself Britain. What were now left unconquered were its purely Celtic portions, the districts along its western coast, where the wild country and the scarcity of towns had given the Roman tradition but little hold, and where, even under the Roman rule, the native chieftains had probably been suffered to maintain much of their older sovereignty over their clans. In the break up of national life during the years that had passed since the withdrawal of the

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imperial administration, such chiefs had become independent lords of distinct provinces; and their feuds and lawlessness broke the strength of the island. In the midst of the sixth century, Gildas paints for us a terrible picture of the savage chieftains who parted Damnonia and our Wales between them.[1] But even then the growing pressure of the invaders was making this mere chaos of jarring princes impossible. The pettier British states were being forced to group themselves before the stranger. In the peninsula of the south-west, Constantine, a descendant, it may be, of Ambrosius Aurelianus, was owned as supreme. West of the Severn, Maelgwn, a prince of what we now know as North Wales, towered above his brother-rulers. The petty states from the Derwent to Dumbarton were fused together in a kingdom of Strathclyde. The consolidation gave a new vigour to the British resistance; and the rout of Ceawlin at Faddiley was but the first proof of the change. Not only were the Welsh strong enough to drive back the West-Saxons from the upper valley of the Severn, and for twenty years after to hold its eastern passes against the advance guard of the Engle who were pressing up the Trent, but they were strong enough to become aggressors in their turn, to penetrate into the heart of the country from which they had been driven half a century before, and to humble the pride of Wessex on the battle-ground of Wanborough.

Britons and Scots.

These triumphs in the south were but a few years old when Augustine came to call them to reconciliation with their foes. And at that very moment triumphs

[1] "Epistola," cc. 1-8.

as great seemed impending in the north. From the moment of his accession to the Northumbrian throne in 593, Æthelfrith had taken up the work of conquest with a ruthless vigour. His sword became the terror of the Welsh along his whole western border, from the Yorkshire moorlands to the dykes and forests which sheltered the Britons of Clydesdale.[1] But fierce as Æthelfrith's attack was, it was only ten years after his accession that his advance in this quarter became so threatening as to unite in one vast confederacy the whole force of the countries along his border. The Welsh states of the north had united in a kingdom of Strathclyde;[2] and the men of Strathclyde found at this juncture allies in a neighbour race. At the close of the Roman rule over Britain, settlers from the north of Ireland (whose inhabitants then bore the name of Scots) crossed the strait of sea between Ulster and Cantyre, and founded a Scot or Irish kingdom, the kingdom of Dalriada, around the shores of Loch Linnhe. This little kingdom had rested till now in obscurity; but freeing itself gradually from the claims of overlordship put forward by the sovereigns of Ireland, and holding its own against the Picts who surrounded it on the north and the east, it started towards the close of the seventh century into a new and vigorous life. It is possible that an impulse was given to it by an Irish exile, Colom or Colomba, who landed in 563 in the little isle of Hii off the Pictish coast, and founded there a religious house which was destined to be the Christian centre of northern Britain. The isle lay within the

[1] Bæda, H. E. i. c. 34. [2] Skene, "Celtic Scotland," vol. i. p. 159.

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dominions of the Picts, but the sympathies of Colomba naturally drew him to his Irish kinsmen round Loch Linnhe, and after ten years of a prosperous rule at Hii his legend tells us that he was bidden by an angel to consecrate Aedhan, the son of Gafran, as King of Dalriada.[1]

Dægsastan.

The consecration of Aedhan in 574 set him high among his neighbour chieftains; and his success in driving the Bernicians from the district south of the head of the Firth of Forth,[2] which was long a debateable land between the various races that surrounded it, set him in the forefront of the struggle against their kings. The series of fights which went on in that quarter for the twenty years between 580 and 600, were the prelude to the more formidable attack of 603. In spite of his seventy years,[3] Aedhan stood first in the league which formed itself in that year against Northumbria; and it was under his command that the hosts of Scots and Britons which had gathered from the whole district between the Lune and the lakes of Argyle marched upon Liddesdale. The point at which they struck was the key of Æthelfrith's kingdom; for from the vale of the Liddel one pass leads into the valley of the Teviot and the Tweed, and another into that of the Tyne.[4] But this important position was guarded by the rampart of the Cattrail, which formed the boundary between Northumbria and Strathclyde; and here, at Dægsa's

[1] Adamnan, "Life of Columba," ed. Reeves, p. 198 and note.

[2] Skene, "Celtic Scotland," i. 160.

[3] Tighernach places his birth in 533 (Skene, "Celtic Scotland," i. 160, note).

[4] Skene, "Celtic Scotland," i. 162.

stone, whose name we still catch in the village of Dawston, Æthelfrith awaited his foe. The fight was a long and obstinate one; Theodbald, a brother of Æthelfrith, was slain, and the whole force he led cut to pieces. But the victory of the Northumbrians was only the more complete. The field was heaped with British dead, while of Aedhan's whole army only a few warriors succeeded in escaping with their king.[1] The blow dissolved the confederacy which had threatened Northumbria. The Scot power, indeed, was utterly broken; "from that day to this," Bæda cries in accents of unwonted triumph more than a hundred years later, "no Scot-king has dared to come into Britain to battle with the English folk." And while the Scots withdrew to their far-off fastnesses, the Welsh themselves lay at the conqueror's mercy. No effort indeed was made to seize their land for English settlement;[2] but we cannot doubt that the submission and tribute which we find Strathclyde owing to later kings of Northumbria was the result of Æthelfrith's victory at Dægsa's stone.

Conversion of East-Saxons.

While Northumbria was thus widening its lordship in the north, Æthelberht was at last entering on the great experiment of Christianizing his dominion in

[1] Bæda, H. E. i. c. 34.

[2] This comes vividly out in the sites of the royal "vills." "In Bæda's day," says Mr. Hodgson Hinde ("Transac. Hist. Soc. of Lanc. and Cheshire," viii. 11), "among the numerous villas maintained for the migratory residence of the royal household, not one occurs beyond the chain of hills which separated the eastern district of the Northumbrian kingdom from the west. The reason is obvious, that even then no attempt was made to colonize the latter."

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Mid-Britain which Gregory and Augustine had urged upon him. His delay showed his sense of its risk;[1] for it was three years after Gregory's appeal, and seven years after the conversion of his own kingdom, before Æthelberht ventured on pushing the new faith across its borders. In 604 Augustine set Justus as bishop in the "Rochester" which had risen on the ruins of Durobrevis,[2] over all the Kentish kingdom west of the Medway. The diocese may mark a dependent realm of West-Kent, whose relation to the common Kentish king would be reflected in the subordination of this see to the mother-see at Canterbury; as the memory of the house of St. Andrew on the Cœlian from which the first English missionary had come was preserved in the dedication to St. Andrew of the church which Æthelberht founded and endowed at Rochester. But his next step was a more important one. Of all his dependent kingdoms Essex was most closely linked to the Kentish king. His sister Ricula had been wedded to the East-Saxon king, Sledda; and their son, Æthelberht's nephew, Sæberht, was now ruling as an under-king over that people.[3] The little kingdom had been raised into consequence by its conquest of London in Æthelberht's boyhood: for if the city had been for a while laid waste the natural advantages of

[1] Gregory's letter is dated 601; Æthelberht's first effort to carry it out was in 604.

[2] Justum vero in ipsâ Cantiâ Augustinus episcopum ordinavit in civitate Durobrevi, quam gens Aⁿglorum a primario quondam illius, qui dicebatur Hrof, Hrofascæstre agnominat" (Bæda, H. E. ii. 3).

[3] Bæda, H. E. ii. 3. "Regnabat, quamvis sub potestate positus Ædelbercti."

its position soon began to draw commerce and inhabitants once more to its site; and in the early years of the seventh century it was already a dwelling-place of Englishmen.[1] In 604 Mellitus was sent as bishop to preach to the East-Saxons;[2] and so complete seemed the success of his preaching in the conversion of Sæberht and his folk that Æthelberht began the building of a church of St. Paul as the bishop's-stool of the new diocese in London itself.[3] His act—for there is no mention even of Sæberht's co-operation—marks how direct was his rule over the East-Saxon realm. But the site of the new church is hardly less significant. Though settlers were again repeopling London, the western extremity of the Roman city can still have been but a waste in 604; for not only could the new church be placed there, but its precincts embraced even to the middle ages a large district around it, which stretched almost from the river to Newgate, and from near the wall as far inland as Cheapside.

The conversion of the East-Saxons, and the success

[1] "Orientalium Saxonum .... quorum metropolis Lundonia civitas est, super ripam præfati fluminis posita, ei ipsa multorum emporium populorum terra marique venientium." From the "est" and "metropolis" I take the latter words of Bæda (H. E. ii. 3) to refer, not to Æthelberht's day, but to his own in the eighth century, when the city was the "mother-city" of the East-Saxon diocese.

[2] Bæda (H. E. ii. 3) says that in 604 Mellitus was sent "ad prædicandum" in Essex, and that, when the province at his preaching received the word, Æthelberht built the church of St. Paul in London. The building was thus after 604, but probably soon after.

[3] Bæda, H. E. ii. 3.

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Rædwald of East-Anglia.

of the first step in that general attack on English heathendom which he had so vigorously urged on Æthelberht, must have been among the last news which reached Gregory the Great ere he died in 606. His death was soon followed by that of Augustine himself; whose body was laid beside the walls of his church of St. Peter and St. Paul, which was now rising to completion.[1] But the death of Gregory was only the prelude to a fresh step forward in the realization of his plans. Rædwald, the king of the East-Anglians, was summoned to Æthelberht's court; and the pressure of his over-lord sufficed to induce him to receive baptism as a Christian.[2] But on his return home he found no will among the East-Anglians to accept the new faith; and their reluctance was backed by the opposition of his wife.[3] Rædwald strove to satisfy the conflicting will of his over-lord and his own people by a characteristic compromise. He retained the older gods, but he placed the new Christ among them, and set a Christian altar in the temples beside the altar of the deities of his race.[4]

[1] Bæda, H. E. lib. ii. c. 3.

[2] Bæda (H. E. ii. 15) gives no date for Rædwald's baptism, his subsequent apostasy, or his after rise to independence. But the first must have been after the conversion of Essex in 604, and the last was some while before Æthelberht's death in 616 (Bæda, H. E. ii. 5). (See postea, p. 238, note 3.) The baptism was "in Cantia" (H. E. ii. 15); the apostasy, "rediens domum."

[3] "Rediens domum, ab uxore suâ et quibusdam perversis doctoribus seductus est."—Bæda, H. E. ii. 15.

[4] "Ita ut, in morem antiquorum Samaritanorum, et Christo servire videretur et diis quibus antea serviebat; atque in eodem fano et altare haberet ad sacrificium Christi, et arulam ad victimas dæmoniorum."—Bæda, H. E. ii. 15. What is odder is

That such a compromise would content Æthelberht was little likely; and we can hardly fail to connect the strife which must have arisen over this rejection of the religion of Kent with the next incident in the history of East Anglia. It was "while Æthelberht was still living" that Rædwald took his place as over-lord in Mid-Britain.[1] Religion indeed may have furnished only a pretext for the rising of the East-Anglians. At this moment they formed the strongest, as they were the most clearly defined, of the central tribes between the Humber and the Thames. From the rest of the island their land was almost entirely cut off by the fens that bordered it on the north, and bent round to join the great forest belt which stretched along its western border, while the broad estuary of the Stour parted it from Essex on the south. The easy access to its shores from the German coast had probably aided in giving a specially Teutonic character to its population; and the recent gathering of its conquering tribes under a single king furnished a stock of warlike energy which found an outlet in the subjection of their neighbours. It was, we can hardly doubt, from a recognition of their superior strength, that, while the East-Saxons still clung to the Kentish

Rædwald's supremacy.

that this temple with its two altars lasted almost to Bæda's day. "Quod fanum rex ejusdem provinciæ Aldwulf, qui nostrâ ætate fuit, usque ad suum tempus perdurasse, et se in pueritia vidisse testabatur."

[1] After describing Æthelberht's "imperium" over the English states south of Humber, and stating that Æthelberht was the third who "imperium hujusmodi obtinuit," Bæda says, "quartus, Rædwald, rex Orientalium Anglorum, qui etiam vivente Ædilbercto *eidem* suæ genti ducatum præbebat" (H. E. ii. 5).

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king,[1] the rest of his subject peoples threw off his supremacy, and accepted in its place the supremacy of Rædwald. Of the incidents of this great revolution we are told nothing. But revolution as it was, it marked how permanent the threefold division of Britain had now become. If Mid-Britain threw off the supremacy of Kent, its states none the less remained a political aggregate; and their fresh union under the king of East Anglia was only a prelude to their final and lasting union under the lordship of Mercia.

Æthelfrith.

That the revolution which set Rædwald of East Anglia over the tribes of Mid-Britain was wrought with so little change save the isolation of Kent and of Essex was probably due to the fact that both the great powers of the south and of the north were too busied at the time with troubles of their own to meddle in those of their neighbours. In Wessex Ceolwulf was still carrying on the long strife of his reign, and battling "incessantly against Angles or Welsh."[2] To the civil struggles within his realm were added attacks from without. In 607 we find him fighting on the south-eastern border of his kingdom against the South-Saxons;[3] and when he was succeeded by his nephew Cynegils, the grandson of Cutha, in 611,[4] the accession of the young king was followed by an inroad of the Britons which carried

[1] I conclude this from Mellitus remaining at London till Æthelberht's death (Bæda, H. E. ii. 5).

[2] Engl. Chron. a. 597.

[3] Engl. Chron. a. 607. This loss of Sussex may mark the date of the break up of Æthelberht's supremacy.

[4] Engl. Chron. a. 611.

them into the heart of the realm. In 614 Cynegils fought at Bampton in Oxfordshire against the Welshmen, and the importance of the battle was shown by the fall of two thousand Britons on the field.[1] How vigorous the temper of the Welsh continued to be is clear from the fact that this inroad of the southern Britons into Wessex followed one of the most terrible overthrows which the Britons of the north had as yet received. Since his victory at Dægsa's Stan in 603 the energies of Æthelfrith seem to have been spent in coping with the disaffection of Deira. The spirit of national independence was quickened afresh among the Deirans as the heirs of their kingly stock grew to manhood, and the presence of these heirs on his border became a danger which called Æthelfrith to action. On the fall of Deira the house of Ælla had found a refuge, it is said, among their British neighbours; and at this time—if we accept Welsh tradition—they were sheltered by the king of Gwynedd, a district which then embraced the bulk of the present North Wales,[2] and

[1] Engl. Chron. a. 614. "This year Cynegils and Cwichelm fought at Beandun, and slew three thousand and sixty-five Welshmen." Beandun is supposed to be Bampton in Oxfordshire. If so, the raid was on the valley of the Cherwell, and the Welsh may have struck over the Cotswolds by Cirencester. They may have been in league, as before, with the Hwiccas.

[2] We shall return afterwards to these sons of Ælla. All we know from English sources is that in 614—a year later—Hereric (Ælla's grandson) and his family, "exularet sub rege Brittonum Cerdice" (Bæda, H. E. iv. 23), and with him may have been Ælla's son Eadwine. But who was this "king Cerdic of the Britons"? Hussey (note to Bæda, p. 225) makes him a king "in Elmet"; Geoffry of Monmouth places him between

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through its outlier of Elmet pushed forward into the heart of southern Deira. The danger of a league between the Deirans and the Welsh was one which Æthelfrith could not overlook; and it was to meet this danger that he broke in 613 through the barrier that had so long held the Engle of the north at bay.

Battle of Chester.

Though the deep indent in the Yorkshire shire-line to the west proves how vigorously the Deirans had pushed up the river-valleys into the moors, it shows that they had been arrested by the pass at the head of Ribblesdale; while further to the south the Roman road that crossed the moors from York to Manchester was blocked by the unconquered fastnesses of Elmet, which reached away to the yet more difficult fastnesses of the Peak. But the line of defence was broken as the forces of Æthelfrith pushed over the moors along Ribblesdale into our southern Lancashire. His march was upon Chester, the capital of Gwynedd, and probably the refuge-place of Eadwine. From the first the position of Chester had marked it out as of military and political importance. Once masters of central Britain, the Romans had sought for a military post from which a legion could watch alike the wild tribes of our Lancashire and Lake district, and the yet wilder tribes of the present North Wales. They found such a position at a point where the Dee, after flowing in a direct course from the south, bends suddenly westward and slants thence to its estuary in the Irish Sea. Just at this turn to the

Maelgwn and Cadvan or Cadwalla as king of Gwynned. I have attempted to reconcile these accounts in the text.

west a rise of red sandstone which abutted on the river along its northern bank offered a site for a town; and it was on this site that the Roman camp was established which grew as men gathered round it into the city of Deva, whose other name of Castrum Legionum has come down to us in the form of Chester. The form of Deva recalled its military origin. The town was in fact a rough square of houses through which the road from Cumbria, entering by the north gate, struck to the bridge across the Dee on the south, while in the very centre of the place the line of this road was crossed at right-angles by the road from Central Britain to Wales, the famous Watling Street, which came over the low watershed of the Trent and entered the city by its eastern gate. Deva, therefore, not only held the passage over the Dee, but commanded the line of communication from Central Britain to both the north-west and the west; and so important a post was naturally guarded by fortifications of no common order. The river, indeed, which after passing the city makes a fresh bend to the north, furnished a natural line of defence on the south and the west of the town, for a thin strip of marsh which filled the lower ground between the bridge and the gate that led to it widened on the west into a broad morass which is now represented by the meadows of the Rood-eye.[1] On the east and the north, where no such natural barrier presented itself, the site of the town was cut off from the general level of the sandstone rise by a trench hewn deeply in the soft red

[1] See Mr. Freeman's map, Norman Conquest, iv. 311.

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rock, over which still tower the massive walls which, patched and changed as they have been in later days, are still mainly the work of Rome. At the news of the danger of Chester, Brocmael, the Prince of Powys, marched anew from his home at Pengwyrn, the after Shrewsbury, to rescue the city from the Northumbrians, as he had rescued it, only twenty years before, from the West-Saxons. But the terror of a coming doom had fallen on the Britons. Two thousand monks dwelt some miles from the city in one of those vast religious settlements which characterized Celtic Christianity, and after a three days' fast a thousand of these made their way to the field to pray for their countrymen. Æthelfrith watched the wild gestures of the monks as they stood apart from the host with arms outstretched in prayer, and bade his men slay them in the coming fight. "Bear they arms or no," said the king, "they fight against us when they cry against us to their God." Abandoned by Brocmael, who fled before the English onset, the monks were the first to fall; but the heavy loss sustained by the Northumbrian army proved the stubbornness of the British resistance.[1] All however was in vain, and the victory of Æthelfrith was followed by the fall of Chester; while the district over which the wasted city had ruled, a district which seems to have stretched from Nantwich as far as the Mersey, or perhaps the Ribble, fell with the city itself into the hands of the Northumbrians.

Its results.

The battle of Chester marked a fresh step forward in the struggle with the Welsh. By their victory at

[1] Bæda, H. E. lib. ii. c. 2.

Deorham the West-Saxons had cut off the Britons of Dyvnaint, of our Dorset, Somerset, Devon, and Cornwall, from the general body of their race. What remained was broken anew into two parts by the battle of Chester; for the conquest of Æthelfrith had parted the Britons of what we now call Wales from the Britons of Cumbria and Strathclyde. From this moment therefore Britain as a country ceased to exist. No general resistance of the Welsh people was henceforth possible, and the warfare of Briton against Englishman died down into a warfare of separate English kingdoms against separate British kingdoms, of Northumbria against the Cumbrians and Strathclyde, of Mercia against the Welsh between Anglesea and the British Channel, of Wessex against the tract which stretches from Mendip to the Land's End. Nor was the victory of less importance to England itself. With it the Northumbrian kingdom was drawn from its isolated existence beyond the Humber. Even had no dynastic interests forced Æthelfrith, as they were soon to force him, into conflict with his fellow-Englishmen in the south, the very fact that he was brought into actual contact with them would have made new relations inevitable. Till now the estuary of the Humber and the huge swamp that stretched from it to the fastnesses of Elmet had served as an effectual barrier between Northumbria and Mid-Britain. But this barrier was turned when the capture of Chester and of its district brought the Northumbrians to the west of what had till now been the "English March." The low rise which forms the watershed between

Stanford's Geographl Estabt

the basins of the Trent and the Severn was a far different barrier from the Humber and the Fen; it is so insignificant indeed that to one who looks from the heights of Cranborne Chase the great central plain through which the Trent rolls its waters seems to bend without a break from Yorkshire round the blue mountains of the Peak through the plains of Cheshire to the sea. That the Britons had held such a border so long against the Mercians shows the stubbornness of their defence as well perhaps as the weakness of these "West-English" assailants; but it could form no lasting or effective barrier between Mid-Britain and the great Northern kingdom which thus found itself on its flank.

Fall of Kent.

Fresh indeed from the glory of his victory at Chester, Æthelfrith could not fail to wake to new dreams of ambition as he looked to the south. Wessex seemed weaker than ever. A new king, Cynegils, had mounted its throne on Ceolwulf's death in 611,[1] but the strife within and without went on without a check, and in the very year after the fall of Chester, in 614, a Welsh army, as we have seen, in union perhaps as before with the Hwiccas, succeeded in penetrating into the heart of the West-Saxon realm. They were defeated indeed at Bampton in the Cherwell valley with a great slaughter, but their inroad showed that if the Britons were no match for Northumbria they were still strong enough and bold enough to form a match for the West-Saxons. The power, too, that had risen on the ruin of Wessex had as suddenly collapsed. The supremacy which but a few years

[1] Engl. Chron. a. 611.

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before Kent had wielded over all Mid-Britain between Watling Street and the Humber, had shrivelled in the later days of Æthelberht into a supremacy over the East-Saxons alone. And at Æthelberht's death in 616 [1] even this fragment of its older empire was lost. Sæberht died in the same year as his overlord, and the sons of King Sæberht threw off their father's faith. The two young kings burst into the church at London where Bishop Mellitus was saying mass. "Why don't you give us that white bread which you gave to our father Saba?" they cried. The bishop bade them first be baptized; but they refused to enter the font. "We have no need of that," they answered, "but we want to refresh ourselves with that bread;" and a renewed offer of baptism was met with a sulky bidding to begone from their land, since he would not hearken to them in so small a matter.[2] The rejection of the new faith was a sign that the East-Saxons had thrown off their subjection to the power which had thrust Christianity on them. But that power itself seemed bent on throwing off the new faith, for when Mellitus crossed the Thames he found even Kent in the throes of a religious reaction. Æthelberht's son Eadbald declared himself a heathen, and in the old heathen fashion took his father's wife for his own. In spite of its twenty years' continuance in the land the new faith had little hold on the Kentishmen; and they followed Eadbald to the altar of Woden as they had followed Æthelberht to the altar of Christ. Mellitus with

[1] Engl. Chron. a. 616; Bæda, H. E. lib. ii. c. 5.

[2] Bæda, H. E. lib. ii. c 5.

Bishop Justus of Rochester fled over to Gaul, while Laurentius of Canterbury, who was proposing to follow them, spent the eve of his departure in the church of St. Peter and St. Paul.[1] A dream, however, in which the first appeared to him, and scourged him for his cowardice, drove him in the morning to a fresh remonstrance with the king. The marks of the scourge and the wondrous tale told by Laurentius did their work. Eadbald "feared much," and the fear was strong enough to again overturn the worship of Woden and restore throughout Kent the worship of Christ.

Eadwine.

But isolated as it had become, and torn as it must have been with this religious strife, Kent ceased to be of weight in English politics. Its power over Mid-Britain had passed, as we have seen, to East Anglia; and it was along the bounds of Rædwald's over-lordship that the borders of the Northumbrian kingdom now stretched from the Humber to the head-waters of the Trent. A collision would have been inevitable in any case; but it was hastened by the jealousy with which Æthelfrith followed the movements of the house of Ælla.[2] Of Ælla's children, the elder had died in

[1] Bæda, H. E. lib. ii. c. 6.

[2] On the invasion of Deira by Æthelric in 589 two sons of Ælla had fled from their fatherland into exile. One of these, whose name is lost, must have already reached manhood, for in the early years of his exile he became the father of Hereric, whose name has been preserved to us through the sanctity of his child, Hild. As we hear no more of him, this elder son must have died in those years of wandering. His son Hereric, with his wife Bregeswid and their two children, Hereswid, who afterwards married Æthelhere (Bæda, H. E. iv. 23), king of East Anglia,

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exile; and his son Hereric, while sheltered at the court of the British king, Cerdic, after the battle of Chester, was removed by poison in 615.[1] But a second child of Ælla's still remained. Eadwine had been but a boy of three years old when his house was driven into exile; and it was only at Hereric's death that he became the representative of the kingly stock of Deira. While his brother's line found shelter among the Welsh, he seems to have sought refuge among the wild fastnesses over the Mercian border[2] with Cearl, who was at that time king of the Mercians. Cearl gave the fugitive his daughter Quænburg to wife; and two boys were born of this marriage.[3] But even from

and the more celebrated Hild, who founded the house of Whitby, was, in Hild's infancy (and she was born in 614), "in exile with Cerdic, a king of the Britons," and was then poisoned. Eadwine, Ælla's other son, must have been much younger than his unnamed brother; he can in fact have been little older than his nephew Hereric, for he was but twenty-eight when Hereric, already a father of two children, was murdered. (Bæda, H. E. iv. 23; Flor. Worc. ed. Thorpe, vol. i. 268). It is noteworthy that one daughter of Ælla, Acha, who remained in Deira, became Æthelfrith's wife; a marriage clearly intended to reconcile the Deirans to his rule.

[1] "Cum vir ejus Hereric exularet sub rege Britonum Cerdice, ubi eb veneno periit."—Bæda, H. E. iv. 23.

[2] "Cum persequente illum Ædilfrido per diversa occultus loca vel regna multo annorum tempore profugus vagaretur, tandem venit ad Rædwaldum."—Bæda, H. E. ii. 12.

[3] "Osfrid et Eadfrid, filii regis Ædwini, qui ambo ei exuli nati sunt de Quænburgâ, filiâ Cearli regis Merciorum."—Bæda, H. E. ii. 14. The boys were born therefore before 617, when Eadwine's "exile" ceased, and in 633 Osfrid was old enough to have a son, Yffi, who was carried off to Kent with the children of Eadwine (Bæda, H. E. ii. 20). But as Osfrid is called "bellicosus juvenis" when he fell at Hæthfield in 633, he may well have

Mercia Eadwine was at last driven, doubtless by the pressure of his Northumbrian rival; and in 617 he appeared at the court of the East Engles, where Rædwald gave him welcome and promises of security.

Eadwine and Rædwald.

The welcome and pledge showed perhaps that the East-Anglian king believed war with the Northumbrians to be inevitable. Eadwine's presence indeed at his court was no sooner announced in the north than three embassies from Æthelfrith followed in quick succession, each offering gold for Eadwine's murder, or threatening war if his life was spared.[1] In spite of his pledges, greed and the fear of war seemed to shake the resolve of Rædwald; and he promised the envoys either to slay the Ælling, or to give him into their hands. It was at sunset that a friend of the exile who had learned the king's will called Eadwine from his sleeping chamber to warn him of the danger and offer him guidance to a fresh lurking-place. The noble temper of one who was destined to greatness breathed in the exile's answer. "I cannot do this thing," he said, "I cannot be the first to treat the pledge which I have received from so great a king as a thing of nought, and that when he has done me no wrong, nor showed me enmity. Better, if I am to die," he ended, in words that told of the weariness of a life of wandering: "better Rædwald should slay me than some meaner man!" The silence of the night gathered round Eadwine

been some eighteen years old, which would bring his birth and Quænburg's marriage to the period just after the battle of Chester.

[1] Bæda, H. E. ii. 12.

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as he sat where his friend had left him on the stone bench at the door of the king's court. Suddenly a man drew near in the dusk, and asked him why at that hour, when others slept, he alone kept watch through the night. The look and dress of the man were foreign and strange to him; as we shall see hereafter, they were probably those of a Roman priest, Paulinus, who had come northwards from Kent, and may now have been in secret communication with Rædwald's queen. The king had revealed to his wife his purpose of betrayal, but her vehement remonstrances had again changed his mood, and he had pledged himself afresh to defend the exile. The keen-witted Italian knew how to make market of the news he had learned. Heedless of the first haughty repulse of his greeting, he asked Eadwine what meed he would give to one who would free him from his cares, what meed to one who promised that he should live to surpass in power every English king that had gone before him? The thunderstruck exile promised a meed worthy such tidings. "And what," went on the stranger, "if he who foretold this could show thee better rede for life and soul than any of thy kin ever heard! wouldst thou hearken to his rede?" Eadwine gave his pledge; and setting his hand on the exile's head with a bidding that with this sign he would hereafter claim the promise, the stranger vanished so rapidly in the dusk that Eadwine held his voice to have been the voice of a spirit.

Battle of the Idle.

It is possible that the king's wavering and negotiation had been little more than a blind to deceive Æthelfrith while the East-English were gathering to

attack him; for the refusal to surrender Eadwine was at once followed by the march of Rædwald's army to the Mercian border. The sudden attack took Æthelfrith by surprise. He seems to have been backing his threats by an advance with a small force through the tangled country along the fen which covered the valley of the lower Trent; for it was here that Rædwald's army attacked him as it emerged from the marshes on the banks of the Idle. The encounter was a memorable one. If Wimbledon was the first recorded fight between the peoples of the conquerors, the fight between Rædwald and Æthelfrith was the first combat between the great powers who had now grouped these peoples about them. But we know nothing of the battle itself. It ended in a victory of the East-Anglian king; but only a snatch of northern song—"Foul ran Idle with the blood of Englishmen"—has preserved the memory of the day when the little stream of Idle saw Æthelfrith's defeat and fall.[1]

[1] Engl. Chron. (Peterborough) 617. Bæda, H. E. lib. ii. c. 12. Bæda marks the spot as "in finibus gentis Merciorum (*i.e.* of the Mercia of his own day), ad orientalem plagam amnis qui vocatur Idlæ." Huntingdon, Hist. Angl. (Arnold), p. 56, gives the proverb, "unde dicitur, amnis Idle Anglorum sanguine sorduit."

CHAPTER VI.

THE NORTHUMBRIAN SUPREMACY.

617—659.

Eadwine in Northumbria.

THE gathering of the conquering peoples who had encamped on the soil of Britain into three great kingdoms, a process which we may look on as fairly completed at the time of the battle of the Idle, seemed the natural prelude to a fusion of these kingdoms themselves into a single England. It is indeed the effort to bring about this union that forms the history of the English people for the next two hundred years, and that gives meaning and interest to what Milton scorned as "battles of kites and crows," the long struggles of Northumbrian, Mercian, and West-Saxon kings to establish their supremacy over the general mass of Englishmen. In this struggle Northumbria took the lead. The attack of Æthelfrith upon Rædwald was, in fact, the opening of such a contest. But its issue seemed to have been fatal to any projects of establishing a supremacy, for the fall of Æthelfrith not only preserved the independence of Mid-Britain, but it broke up for the moment the kingdom which his sword had held together. On his defeat Deira rose

against her Bernician masters, and again called the line of Ælla in its representative, Eadwine, to its throne. Eadwine, however, was as resolute to hold the two realms together as Æthelfrith had been; and he was no sooner welcomed back by his people of Yorkshire than he marched northward to make the whole of Northumbria his own. As it had been originally created by the subjection of Deira to the king of the Bernicians, so it was now held together by the subjection of Bernicia to the king of the Deirans. The march of Eadwine drove Æthelfrith's seven sons from their father's realm; and followed by a train of young thegns, whose exile was probably the result of a fruitless struggle, the descendants of Ida found refuge over the Forth among the Picts.[1]

Elmet

Nor was there any loss of strength for the realm under its new ruler. Eadwine was in the prime of life[2] when he mounted the throne, and the work of government was carried on with as ceaseless an energy as that of Æthelfrith himself. On his northern border, if we may trust a tradition drawn from its name, Eadwine crowned a hill which overlooks the Firth of Forth with his own "Eadwine's burh," or Edinburgh, which was to grow from a mere border post against the Picts into the capital of a northern kingdom. But it was not in the north or in the north-west that his main work seems to have been done. To the Bernician house of Ida, the most pressing foes would be the Britons of Cumbria and Strathclyde; but to the Deiran house of Ælla the

[1] Bæda, H. E. iii. c. 1.

[2] He must have been at his accession about thirty years old.

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most pressing foes were the Britons of Elmet. York, and not Bamborough, was the centre of Eadwine's kingdom, and from any of the Roman towers which still recalled the older glories of that city, the young king could see rising but a few miles off to the westward the woodlands and moorlands of a British realm. The kingdom which thus fronted Eadwine covered no small space of the present Yorkshire. On the south it extended to the fastnesses of the Peak, where the Pecsetan of the middle English were still no doubt pressing slowly up the valleys of the Derwent and the Dove. To the west its border can hardly have run in any other line than along the higher moorlands of the chain that parts our Yorkshire from our Lancashire. How far Elmet extended to the north we have nothing to tell us; but from the character of the ground itself we may fairly gather that the later forest of Knaresborough formed a portion of its area, and that it extended in this direction as far as the upper valleys of the Wharfe and the Nidd. Its eastern boundary, which is more important for our story, can luckily be fixed with greater precision; for the road which the Roman engineers drew northward from their bridge over the Don at Danum or Doncaster, and which bent in a shallow curve by Castleford and by Tadcaster to York, skirted the very edge of the forest tract which remained in possession of the Britons. Here Leeds itself preserves the name of Loidis, by which Elmet seems also to have been known, while Barwick in Elmet shows by its position how closely the edge of the British kingdom must have run to the Roman road.

The kingdom of Elmet then answered, roughly speaking, to the present West-Riding of Yorkshire, but no contrast can be imagined more complete than the contrast between the district of to-day, with its huge towns and busy industries, and the Elmet of Eadwine's day. The bulk of its area must then have been, as it remained indeed down to the seventeenth century, among the loneliest and most desolate parts of Britain. In the south the great woodland which covered it long remained unchanged. As late as Henry the Eighth's days, Sir Thomas Wortley could set his lodge on the crag of Wharncliffe in the midst of the huge oak forest through which the Don, here little more than a mountain torrent, hurries down to the plain, "for his plesor to hear the harte's bell" amidst the stillness of the woods. More to the north by Wakefield the priory of Nostell, in the vale of Calder, tells in its name that the place was still a North Stall of foresters in the woodland when, in the days of the Norman kings, a royal chaplain gathered the hermits whom he found dwelling in its quiet glades into a religious house; while along the skirts of this district stretched the Barnsdale whose "merry greenwood" gave a home to the outlaws and broken men of Robin Hood. To the north was a vast reach of bare moorlands scored with the deep and grassy vales of the Wharfe and the Nidd, while in the very heart of the kingdom thickets and forests, in which the last wolf ever seen in Yorkshire is said to have been killed by John of Gaunt, formed a screen for the town which still, after so many changes and chances,

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preserves its original British name of Loidis or Leeds.[1]

Conquest of Elmet.

A few miles to the northward, indeed, of Leeds, traces have been found of Roman ironworks, but all signs of industrial life had probably long disappeared when Eadwine marched from York for the conquest of Elmet.[2] His immediate ground of attack was possibly a wish to avenge the poisoning of his uncle, Hereric, by its king, Cerdic; but we know nothing of the winning of this district or of its settlement. On the very edge of the British kingdom, however, on a rise of ground westward of the road from Castleford to Tadcaster, we find what is probably a memorial of this conquest in the group of earthworks at Barwick in Elmet, entrenchments and ditches inclosing a large area with a mound in its centre, which probably marks the site of one of the burhs or fortified houses with which Eadwine held down the country he had subdued. At Leeds itself, too, the king seems to have established a royal vill, which would be of the same military character; while yet further to the westward in the upper valley of the Calder, where no "Othere" had as yet settled in the "field" of the coming Huddersfield, but through which a solitary track struck to the border moorlands, we may perhaps find the site of another of Eadwine's

[1] When the Cistercians settled at Kirkstall close to Leeds in the twelfth century, they found nothing there "præter ligna et lapides."

[2] The only authority for the date of this conquest is Nennius, c. 63. "Eoguin, filius Alli, . . . occupavit Elmet, et expulit Certic, regem illius regionis." But we know from Bæda that Elmet was in Eadwine's hands before his death.

dwellings and fortresses beside the site of the ruins of Campodunum.[1]

Conquest of the South.

But in such a region we naturally find scanty traces of English settlement. The importance of the conquest, indeed, lay not so much in its addition of long ranges of moorland and woodland to Eadwine's realm, as in its clearing away the barrier which this British kingdom interposed between Northumbria and Æthelfrith's conquests to the south of the Ribble. The kingdom of Eadwine thus stretched without a break from the eastern to the western sea, and Chester must have acquired a new importance as the western seaport of Eadwine's realm, for it can only have been in the harbour of Chester that the king can have equipped the fleet which he needed to subdue the sites of Anglesea and Man.[2] But the conquest of Elmet did more than raise Northumbria into a sea-power. With the reduction of this district the border of the northern kingdom stretched without a break along the border of Mid-Britain, and the pressure of

[1] After his conversion, Eadwine "in Campoduno, ubi tunc villa regia erat, fecit basilicam" (Bæda, ii. xiv). (Ælfred's paraphrase however gives for Campodunum "Donafelda," which Gale believes to be Tanfield by Ripon near the Swale.) It was burnt after Eadwine's fall, but its altar was preserved in Bæda's day in the monastery of Abbot Thrydulf, "quod est in silva Elmete" (ibid.); and in its stead "pro quâ reges posteriores fecere sibi villam in regione quæ vocatur Loidis" (ibid.). The "Elmedsætna" with their territory of six hundred hides mentioned in the old list given by Kemble ("Saxons in England," vol. i. p. 81) are probably the settlers in Elmet after its conquest.

[2] "Mevanias Brittonum insulas, quæ inter Hiberniam et Brittanniam sitæ sunt, Anglorum subjecit imperio."—Bæda, H. E. lib. ii. c. 5.

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Eadwine upon the southern Engle became irresistible. Rædwald's death followed immediately after his victory at the Idle,[1] and the dominion he had built up may have fallen to pieces in the hands of his son Eorpwald; it is at any rate certain that before the close of his reign the tribes of the Trent valley[2] had come to own the supremacy of Eadwine. It was in fact his mastery over Mid-Britain that brought the Northumbrian king to the borders of Wessex. Eadwine prepared for a struggle with this last rival by a marriage with the daughter of the Kentish king, Eadbald, which, if it did not imply the subjection of the Kentish kingdom, in any case bound it to his side. In the summer of 625[3] the priest Paulinus brought Ethelburh or Tate to the Northumbrian court at York. The marriage was taken by the West-Saxons as a signal of the coming attack; and a story preserved by Bæda tells something of the fierceness of the struggle which ended in the subjection of the conquerors of Southern Britain to the supremacy of Northumbria. In the Easter-court of 626,[4] which he held in a king's town near the river Derwent, Eadwine gave audience to Eumer, an envoy of the West-Saxons. Eumer

[1] Eorpwald succeeded him in 617.—Bæda, H. E. lib. ii. c. 15; see Hussey's note.

[2] Paulinus baptized "præsente rege Eadwine" in the Trent valley at Tiovulfingacaester, and this conversion of the Lindsey folk with the establishment of a bishop's see at Lincoln must have been brought about by the same influence (Bæda, H. E. lib. ii. c. 16), as well as the conversion of the East-Anglian king Eorpwald (ibid. c. 15).

[3] Bæda, H. E. lib. ii. c. 9.

[4] Bæda, H. E. lib. ii. c. 9.

brought a message from Cwichelm, who was now joined in their kingship with his brother Cynegils, but in the midst of the conference he started to his feet, drew a dagger from his robe, and flung himself on the Northumbrian sovereign. Lilla, a thegn of the royal war-band, threw himself between Eadwine and the assassin; but so fell was the stroke that even through Lilla's body the dagger still reached the king. The wound however was slight, and Eadwine was soon able to avenge it by marching on the West-Saxons and slaying or subduing all who had conspired against him.[1] The issue of such a triumph must have been the recognition of his supremacy by Cynegils:[2] and with the submission of Cynegils the overlordship of Eadwine practically stretched over the whole of Britain.

Eadwine's rule.

In the nine eventful years which had passed since he mounted his father's throne Eadwine had thus gathered the whole English race into a single political body.[3] He was king or overlord of every English kingdom, save of Kent; and Kent was knit to him by his marriage with Æthelburh. The gathering of the English conquerors into the three great southern, midland, and northern groups, which had characterized the past forty years, from the battle of Deorham to the battle of the Idle, seemed to have

[1] Engl. Chron. a. 626; Bæda, H. E. ii. 9.

[2] "In deditionem recepit."—Bæda, H. E. ii. 9.

[3] "Ita ut, quod nemo Anglorum ante eum, omnes Brittanniæ fines, qua vel ipsorum vel Brittonum provinciæ habitant, sub ditione acceperit."—Bæda, H. E. ii. 9. "Majore potentiâ cunctis qui Brittanniam incolunt, Anglorum pariter et Brittonum, populis præfuit præter Cantuariis tantum."—Bæda, H. E. lib. ii. c. 5.

BRITAIN IN 626.
Scale of Miles.
0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70
Strathclyde
Northumbria
SUPREMACY OF EADWINE
Isle of Man
Anglesea
North Welsh
Cumbria
Mercians
West Mercians
Middle Engle
North Folk
East Engle
South Engle
South Folk
East Saxons
Middle Sexe
Surrey
KENT
West Saxons
South Saxons
West Wales
WYRE
DEAN
HWICCA
LINDSWARA
Stanford's Geograph! Estabt

ended in their gathering into a single people in the hand of Eadwine. Under Eadwine, indeed, the greatness of Northumbria reached its height. Within his own dominions the king displayed a genius for civil government which shows how utterly the mere age of conquest had passed away. With him began an English proverb often applied to after kings, "A woman with her babe might walk scatheless from sea to sea in Eadwine's days."[1] Peaceful communication revived along the deserted highways; the springs by the roadside were marked with stakes, and a cup was set beside each for the traveller's refreshment. Some faint traditions of the Roman past may have flung their glory round what Bæda ventures to call this "Empire of the English"; some of the Roman majesty had at any rate come back with its long-lost peace. Nor is it without significance that we find Eadwine's capital established at York. A hundred years had passed since its conquest by the Deirans had left the city a desolate ruin; but its natural advantages as the centre of a fertile tract and as the highest point to which sea-traversing boats could find their way up the Ouse must soon have begun to draw population again to its site. We do not, however, hear of its new life till we find Eadwine established at York as his capital,[2] and the choice of such a settlement in a spot where so much

[1] Bæda, H. E. lib. ii. c. 16. The words, "from sea to sea" show that this order was not confined to Eadwine's own Deira, but extended over his newer conquests of Elmet and the Ribble country.

[2] Bæda, H. E. lib. ii. c. 14.

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remained to tell of the greatness of Rome can hardly have failed to connect itself with the imperial dreams which were stirring in the mind of Eadwine. In his wide rule over the whole of Britain Eadwine seems to have felt himself a successor to its Roman masters. A standard of purple and gold floated before him as he rode through village and township, while a feather-tuft attached to a spear, the Roman tufa, was borne in front of him as he walked through their streets.[1]

Conversion of Northumbria.

But the effort for a political unity was a premature effort. Not till two hundred years were past were the English peoples to be really gathered into a single realm. Not till three hundred years were gone by was a real national life to develop itself in a single England. The work was indeed to be in great measure brought about by the very agency which at this moment came to wreck the work of Eadwine. Though Christianity had shrunk back since the death of Æthelberht within the bounds of the Kentish kingdom, the hope of carrying out Gregory's wider plans of conversion had never been abandoned, and in the marriage of Æthelburh with Eadwine, Archbishop Justus saw an opening for attempting the conquest of the north. The new queen brought with her as her chaplain Paulinus, whom we have already seen in East-Anglia. He had been consecrated as Bishop of York in preparation for this journey, and his tall, stooping form, slender, aquiline nose, and black hair falling round a thin, worn face, were long remembered in the north. Æthelburh's zeal for her

[1] Bæda, H. E. lib. ii. c. 16.

faith reaped its reward, for, moved by her prayers, Eadwine promised to believe in her God if he returned successful from the fight with the West-Saxons. But he was slow to redeem his pledge. Whether the fate of Æthelberht had warned him or no, he spent the whole winter in silent musing,[1] till Paulinus, laying his hand on his head, revealed himself as the stranger who had promised Eadwine deliverance in Rædwald's court, and claimed the fulfilment of the pledge which the exile had given.[2] Moved, it may be, by the appeal or convinced by the long musings of the winter-tide, Eadwine declared himself a Christian, and in the spring of 627 he gathered the Wise Men of Northumbria to give their rede on the faith he had embraced. The record of the debate which followed is of singular interest as revealing the sides of Christianity which pressed most on our forefathers. To finer minds its charm lay, then as now, in the light it threw on the darkness which encompassed men's lives—the darkness of the future as of the past. "So seems the life of man, O king," burst forth an aged Ealdorman, "as a sparrow's flight through the hall when one is sitting at meat in winter-tide, with the warm fire lighted on the hearth but the icy rain-storm without. The sparrow flies in at one door and tarries for a moment in the light and heat of the hearth-fire, and then flying forth from the other vanishes into the darkness whence it came. So tarries for a moment the life of man in our sight;

[1] "Sæpe diu solus residens, ore quidem tacito, sed in intimis cordis multa secum conloquens."—Bæda, H. E. lib. ii. c. 9.

[2] Bæda, H. E. lib. ii. c. 12.

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but what is before it, what after it, we know not. If this new teaching tells us aught certainly of these, let us follow it." Coarser argument told on the crowd. "None of your folk, Eadwine, have worshipped the gods more busily than I," said Coifi the priest, "yet there are many more favoured and more fortunate. Were these gods good for anything they would help their worshippers." Then leaping on horseback he hurled a spear into the sacred temple at Godmanham, and with the rest of the Witan embraced the religion of the king.[1]

Its results.

But hardly had the change been made, when its issues justified the king's long hesitation. Easily as it was brought about in Eadwine's court, the religious revolution gave a shock to the power which he had built up in Britain at large. Though Paulinus baptized among the Cheviots as on the Swale, it was only in Deira that the Northumbrians really followed the bidding of their king. If Eadwine reared anew a church at York, no church, no altar, rose in Bernicia from the Forth to the Tees.[2] Nor was the new faith more fortunate in the subject kingdoms. Lindsey indeed hearkened to the preaching of Paulinus,[3] and Rædwald's son, Eorpwald of East Anglia, bent to baptism soon after the conversion of Eadwine.[4] But even here the faith of Woden and Thunder was not to fall without a struggle. Eorpwald was at once slain by a pagan thegn; and his

[1] Bæda, H. E. lib. ii. c. 13.

[2] Bæda, H. E. iii. 2.

[3] Bæda, H. E. lib. ii. 16.

[4] Bæda, H. E. lib. ii. 15. For the date of Eorpwald's baptism, see Hussey's note in his Bæda, p. 105.

people returned to their old heathendom. Such a rejection of the faith of their overlord marks, no doubt, a throwing off of Eadwine's supremacy by the men of East Anglia; and thus prepares us for the revolution which must have taken place at the same moment throughout the valley of the Trent, and above all among the West Engle, or Mercians.

The Mercians.

Till now the Mercians had in no wise been distinguished from the other Engle tribes. Their station, indeed, on the Welsh border had invited them to widen their possessions by conquest, while the rest of the Anglian peoples of Mid-Britian were shut off from any chance of expansion; and this frontier position must have kept their warlike energy at its height. But nothing had yet shown in them a power which could match even that of the Engle on the eastern coast. It was only at the close of the sixth century indeed that the settlers along the march had drawn together into a kingdom: and the bounds of the Kentish and East-Anglian overlordships show that the two earliest Mercian kings, Crida and Wibba, must have owned the supremacy of Æthelberht, and bowed beneath the supremacy of Rædwald. When East-Anglia fell from her pride of place into subjection to Eadwine, we can hardly doubt that a third king, Cearl, who seems to have seized the throne in spite of the claims of Wibba's son, Penda, submitted with small reluctance to an overlord who had wedded his daughter while in exile at his court. But Quænburg and Cearl had alike passed away; and at this moment the old relations of friendship between Northumbria and these Western Engle were changed

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into an attitude of mutual hostility by the accession of Penda.

Penda.

It was in 626, on the very eve of Eadwine's conversion, that Penda the son of Wibba became king of the Mercians.[1] Penda was already a man of fifty years old; and famous for the daring of his raids on the neighbours of his people during the years of his exclusion from the throne.[2] He seems to have seized the kingship at last after a violent struggle, in which the sympathies if not the actual aid of the Northumbrian overlord must, from his ties of kindred, have been with Cearl and his house. With Penda's success, therefore, Eadwine saw himself fronted by a formidable foe in the upper Trent valley. But, vigorous as the new Mercian king was, we can hardly doubt that it was not so much his vigour as the conversion of Eadwine which shook the Northumbrian power over Mid-Britain, and enabled Penda at once to seize the supremacy over its Engle peoples. His efforts would no doubt be aided by the tendency of these peoples themselves to fall back on their older grouping in the days of Rædwald, if not of Æthelberht, and by their preference of a South-Humbrian to a North-Humbrian overlord. But whatever was the cause of his success, he must have already asserted his superiority over the English tribes about him before he could have ventured to

[1] Malm. Gest. Reg. i. sec. 74. According to Henry of Huntingdon, Crida was the first Mercian king; on his death in 600 he was followed by Wibba for ten years, to 610; then by Cearl from 610 to 626; then by Wibba's son, Penda.

[2] Ibid.

attack the West-Saxons as he attacked them only two years after his accession, in 628.[1] The strife, however, of the West-Saxon tribes among themselves, as well as the terrible overthrow they had lately suffered at the hands of Eadwine, favoured their assailant; and their defeat at Cirencester seems to have been a decisive one. The locality of the battle, in the territory not of the original West-Saxon kingdom, but of the Hwiccas, who, as we have seen, still remained as late as Æthelberht's days a separate people from their fellow-Gewissas, may perhaps explain Penda's success, if, like the Britons at Wodensbury, he fought as an ally of the Hwiccas against Cynegils and Cwichelm. The strife in any case ended in a formal treaty,[2] whose provisions we may perhaps guess from what we find soon after to be the bounds of the Mercian rule. In the days of Penda's son, Wulfhere, the whole territory of the Hwiccas had become part of the Mercian realm; and there is no recorded event by which we can account for this great change of boundaries save the battle of Cirencester.

Penda and Eadwine.

Such a triumph at once changed the political aspect of Britain. Not only had Mercia risen to supremacy over the valley of the Trent, but her conquest had carried her dominion to the mouth of the Severn and added to her realm our Worcestershire, our Gloucestershire, and our Herefordshire. The West-Saxons, stripped of Ceawlin's winnings, not only shrank into a lesser power, but necessarily passed from their subjection under Eadwine to a virtual submission

[1] Engl. Chron. a. 628.
And gethingodan þa.—Eng. Chron. a. 628.

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to Penda. The Northumbrian king was in fact thrown suddenly back across the Humber; and the work of his earlier years was undone at a blow. But Eadwine was far from relinquishing his aims. The religion he had embraced was used to restore his shaken power; and a Burgundian bishop, Felix, was sent by his brother-in-law, the Kentish king, to again attempt the conversion of the East-Angles.[1] Eadwine however had a stronger arrow in his quiver. Another son of Rædwald, Sigeberht, had been driven under Eorpwald from East-Anglia, and had taken refuge among the Franks over sea. There he had become a Christian; and Eadwine was thus enabled to bring a Christian king of their own stock to the East-Anglians in 631.[2] The reception of Sigeberht involved a fresh reception of Christianity, and doubtless of the overlordship of Northumbria with it. But the winning of East-Anglia made a war with Penda inevitable. East-Engle and West-Engle had in fact to settle which should be supreme over their fellow-peoples about them, and around which should be built up the great Engle state of Mid-Britain. And beyond this strife lay the greater struggle which was to decide whether the Engle of Mid-Britain could hold their own against the Engle of the North.

Penda and the Welsh.

In such a strife the odds were heavy against Penda, had he waited to ensounter the hosts of East-Anglia and of Northumbria at once. To crush the northern state, and then deal singly with his rival in Mid-

[1] Bæda, H. E. lib. ii. c. 15.

[2] Bæda, H. E. lib. ii. c. 15.

Britain was his obvious policy, and accounts for his choosing the part of assailant in the coming struggle. But even single-handed Northumbria was more than his match, and he could hardly have ventured on an attack on Eadwine had he not found aid in the people which had till now been the special enemies of his own border-folk. Cadwallon, the Welsh king of Gwynned, may have seen in Eadwine's difficulties a chance of avenging his race for the conqest of Elmet, as well as of winning back the country which Æthelfrith had reft away; and it was with Cadwallon that Penda leagued himself against their common foe. The absolute severance between conquerors and conquered, which had played so great a part in the events of the last two hundred years, was, as we have seen, fast breaking down. The union of Britons with the Hwiccas in their attack on Ceawlin, the home which the house of Ælla found among the Welsh of Elmet as well as the home which the house of Æthelfrith found among the Picts, were indications that the Britons would henceforth look for help in their struggle to divisions among the Englishmen themselves, and that Englishmen in their turn were willing to seek British aid against their countrymen. Penda boldly recognized this fact as an element in English politics, when his host marched with the host of Cadwallon to attack the Northumbrian king.[1]

Battle of Hatfield

The district in which Eadwine took post to meet Penda's attack was on the northernmost skirt of that vast tract of fen-land which formed a natural barrier for Northumbria against any assailant from Mid-

[1] Bæda, H. E. lib. ii. c. 20.

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Britain. Even the Roman engineers failed to carry a causeway directly from the south across the marshes of the Trent, and the traveller on his way to Eburacum was forced to make a circuit from Leicester to Lincoln, and to cross the fen, perhaps by a ferry, in the neighbourhood of Gainsborough, ere he could reach a firmer road at Bawtrey, and strike directly for the north. But even this firmer road was little more than a strip of ground hard pressed between forest and fen; for on one side, as we have seen, it was closely bordered by the oak-woods of Elmet, while on the other the fen stretched onward without a break from the course of the Trent to the lower channels of the Don, the Aire, the Derwent, and the Ouse. And not only was this gateway into the Northumbrian territory a narrow one, but it had from very ancient times been barred by strong defences. The British tribe of the Brigantes had drawn across this strip of land, behind the upper course of the Don, so strong a line of entrenchments that they seem to have held for a time even the Romans in check; and this work, which may still be traced after the waste of a thousand years, would if manned by the soldiers of Eadwine have been too formidable a barrier for Penda to face. To right or left, however, advance was scarcely less difficult; for it would have been hard to force a way through the southern fastnesses of Elmet, and it seemed even harder to find a road through the skirts of the fen which stretched away to the east. It was into the fen, however, that Penda plunged. Its wide reaches of mere marsh and broad pools of water swarming with

eels were broken by lifts of slightly higher ground, covered by turf which rose and fell, so ran the popular belief, with the rise and fall of the rivers that ran through the district, and whose soil was so soft that it was easy to thrust a pole through it into the waters beneath. The rises, however, were firm enough to afford covert for vast herds of deer,[1] and it was from one such rise to another that the Mercian army must have made its way along the fen-tracks that threaded this desolate region. Hatfield, or the Heathfield, was one of the northernmost of these reaches of soppy moor; it lay in fact just south of the Don; and Eadwine, crossing that river by the paved ford which has left its mark on the name of Stainford, may have hoped by the seizure of this position to crush his assailant as he struggled through the pools and moor-paths of the fen. It was here at any rate, somewhere near the present town of Hatfield, that the two armies met; but in the fight which followed the Deiran king was defeated and slain.[2]

Its results.

Eadwine's overthrow proved the ruin of his house. Of his elder sons by the Mercian Quænburg one fell on the field, and another took refuge with Penda: while his wife Æthelburh fled with her own two younger children to her brother in Kent.[3]

[1] In 1609 Prince Henry slew five hundred deer in a single day's hunting here; and before the draining of these fens in the civil wars deer were said to be as plentiful in Hatfield Chase as "sheep upon a hill." Smiles, in his "Lives of the Engineers" (Brindley and Early Engineers, ch. ii.), gives an account of this drainage.

[2] Bæda, H. E. lib. ii. c. 20; Engl. Chron. a. 633.

[3] Bæda, H. E. lib. ii. c. 20.

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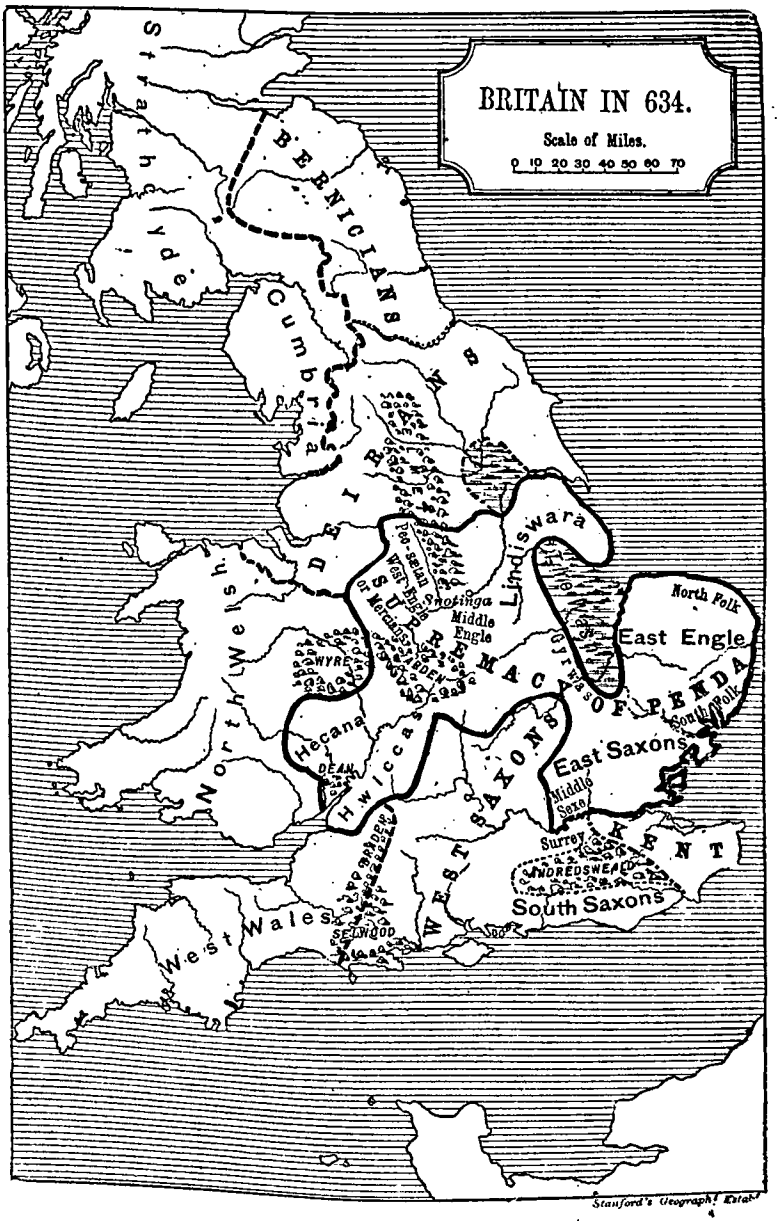
With her fled Paulinus, for the battle was at once followed by a revival of the old heathendom; and Osric, a son of Ælla's brother Ælfric, who mounted the throne on Eadwine's fall, threw off Christianity and set up again the faith of Woden.[1] But Osric reigned over Deira alone; for the Englishmen of Bernicia seized on the defeat to break up the Northumbrian realm by throwing off the overlordship of their southern neighbours. They recalled the house of Ida; and Eanfrith, a son of Æthelfrith, returned from his refuge among the Picts to be welcomed as their king. Bernicia, as we saw, had never received the faith of Eadwine; and Eanfrith, though he had become a Christian at Hii, no sooner found himself among his people than like Osric he threw off the faith of Christ. The reigns of the two kings lasted one miserable year, a year whose shame was never forgotten among the Englishmen of the north. Penda indeed showed no inclination to follow up his victory by any attack on Northumbria; he even gave shelter to one of Eadwine's sons, when he was driven out, after some vain struggle perhaps with Osric for the Deiran throne.[2] His aim was to complete his dominion over Mid-Britain; he had in fact fought with Eadwine only to isolate East-Anglia; and it was East-Anglia that he attacked in the year after the battle at Hatfield, in 634. Before the threat of his attack King Sigeberht had withdrawn from his throne to a monastery. His people dragged him back however from his cell as Penda approached, in faith that his presence would

[1] Bæda, H. E. lib. iii. c. 1. [2] Bæda, H. E. lib. ii. c. 20.


BRITAIN IN 634.
Scale of Miles.
0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70
Picts
Strathclyde
BERNICIANS
Cumbrians
WELSH
DEIRA
Lindiswara
North Folk
East Engle
South Folk
Hecana
East Saxons
Middle Sexe
Surrey
KENT
South Saxons
West Saxons
North Welsh
West Wales
Stanford's Geograph! Estab.

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bring them the favour of Heaven; but though the monk-king was set in the forefront of the host he would bear no weapon save a wand; and his fall was followed by the rout of his army and the submission of his kingdom.[1] It remained Christian indeed, for his brother Anna who followed him on the throne was as zealous for the faith as Sigeberht; but Anna only reigned as an under-king; and East-Anglia became part of the overlordship of Penda.

Battle of the Hevenfeld.

If Penda had withdrawn however, Cadwallon remained harrying in the heart of Deira, and made himself master even of York.[2] Osric fell in an attempt to recover the town; and even the Bernician Eanfrith, while suing for peace, was murdered by the British king. But the triumph of the Britons was as brief as it was strange. Oswald, a second son of Æthelfrith, left Hii on his brother's death to place himself at the head of his race; and in 635 a small force gathered round the new king near the Roman Wall.[3] The host of the Bernicians was heathen as of old, and of Oswald's force none were Christians save twelve nobles who had followed him from Hii, and who, like himself, had been converted during their exile. But Oswald had no mind to cast away his faith like his brother Eanfrith. On the night before the battle a dream came to his aid. He saw the tall form of the founder of Hii, Colomba, shrouding with its mantle almost the whole English camp, while his mighty

[1] Bæda, H. E. lib. iii. c. 18, 19.

Bæda, H. E. lib. iii. c. 1. I take the "Oppido municipio" here to be York.

[3] Bæda, H. E. lib. iii. c. 2.

voice bade the king "Be strong, and do like a man; lo! I am with thee."[1] As Oswald woke he gathered his Witan to tell them the vision; and with the quick enthusiasm of a moment of peril the whole host pledged itself to become Christian if it conquered in the fight. Obedient to the counsel Colomba had given him in his dream, the king stole out from his camp on the following night, and fell with the dawn on the host of Cadwallon. Legend told how Oswald set up a cross of wood as his standard ere the fight began,[2] holding it with his own hands till the hollow in which it was fixed was filled by his soldiers, and how then, throwing himself on his knees, the king cried to his host to pray to the living God. They rose to fall upon the Britons. The surprise seems to have been complete. The Welsh were cut to pieces. Cadwallon fell fighting on the "Heaven's field," as after times called the field of battle, and the fall of this last great hero of the British race left the Englishmen of Bernicia supreme in the north.[3]

Its results.

The victory of the Heaven-field indeed is memorable as the close of the last rally which the Britons ever made against their conquerors. Through more than fifty years, from the battle of Faddiley to the fall of Cadwallon, they had seemed at last strong enough to turn the tide of victory. In the south they had struck down Ceawlin and penetrated to the very heart of Wessex. In Central Britain they had long held the Mercians at bay even along the weak frontier of

1 Adamnan, "Life of Columba," ed. Reeves, p. 14—16.

2 This cross was still standing in Bæda's time (H. E. iii. 2).

3 Engl. Chron. a. 635; Bæda, H. E. lib. iii. c. 1.

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the watershed of the Trent. Even in the north, though their strongest combination had been crushed at Dægsastan, and their line fatally broken by the overthrow of Chester, they had at last succeeded in defeating Eadwine, in breaking up the realm of Northumbria, and in encamping as victors for a whole year on its soil. But with the battle of the Heaven-field this rally came to a end. The strength of the Welsh was exhausted; and henceforth their work was simply a long struggle of self-defence. To England the battle was of even larger import. It restored in great part the political work of Eadwine; for Deira submitted to Æthelric's grandson as it had submitted to Æthelric, and the Northumbrian kingdom found itself restored in the firm hands of Oswald.[1] But it did more than restore his religious work. The conversion of the Bernicians gave Northumbria a religious unity such as it had never known till now, and with this unity Christianity rose to a yet more vigorous life. It came indeed in a different form from the Christianity of Eadwine; for it was not the Church of Paulinus which had nerved Oswald to his struggle for the cross, or which carried out in Bernicia the work of Christianization which his victory began. Paulinus, as we have seen, had fled southwards at Eadwine's fall; and the Roman Church, though safely established in Kent, ceased to struggle elsewhere against the heathen reaction. From that moment its place in the conversion of northern England was taken by missionaries

[1] As a son of Eadwine's sister, Acha, Oswald partly shared the royal blood of Deira, and would thus be more acceptable to the Deirans than his father.

from a land which was henceforth to play a part in English history.

Ireland.

A Roman general, Agricola, as he gazed from the western coast of Britain across the channel which parted the two countries, had planned, as the last of his exploits, the conquest of Ireland. But the threat of Roman invasion was never carried out; and no foreign influence disturbed till a far later time the social and political development of the Irish people. In this way the tribal life which the Celts brought with them from the plains of Asia went on in Ireland as it went on nowhere else in the western world. Two of the great physical agents indeed which brought about its modification elsewhere were wanting, or all but wanting, there. In other lands mountain ranges, great river valleys, a varied distribution of hill and plain, tended to throw smaller tribes together into peoples and nations, and to form from their union a corporate organization which widened and elevated the sphere of human life and human action. Within the tribe itself, on the other hand, an increase in the culture of grain, above all in the culture of wheat, did much to fix what had been a mere mass of wandering herdsmen to particular spots, to make land rather than kinship the basis of society, to turn the sept into a village community, and thus to create new and higher types of social and domestic life. But the form and climate of Ireland offered almost insuperable obstacles to the full development of either of these processes of social growth. Ireland was an immense plain, set indeed within a hilly coast-line and broken by the course of the Shannon, by some lakes in the

north, and by wide tracts of bog-land in the centre, but presenting over a vast area few of those natural features which could isolate one group of tribes from another. On the other hand, its moist climate and ceaseless rain made wheat-culture uncertain and profitless, while it spread before the herdsman the greenest and most tempting of pasture lands. Throughout its history therefore the island remained a huge grazing ground. The most famous of the older Irish tales is the story of a cattle-raid; to drive off kine, indeed, was the main aim of the forays of tribe upon tribe. In Irish law fines, dues, rents, were all paid in live stock and generally in kine. Cattle were, in fact, to a very late time the chief Irish medium of exchange; and even at the opening of the sixteenth century we find an Earl of Kildare paying twenty cows as the price of a book. It was by taking a grant, not as elsewhere of land, but of cattle, that the free tribesman became the man or vassal of an Irish chief. In all of this we have no doubt indications of a system of property which was common at some time of their history to every Aryan nation. The peculiarity of Ireland lay in the preservation of such a social state when it had passed away elsewhere; and this preservation sprang from the nature of its climate and its soil.

Its institutions.

How primitive were the social institutions of the country may be seen from the character of its family life. Of polygamy indeed in households held together by the despotic power of the father, such as existed among the Celts in Gaul, we hear nothing among the Celts in Ireland. But temporary cohabitation

remained even to the sixteenth century a recognized social usage, though no doubt an exceptional one, while provision was made for the legitimization, not only of bastards, but of a wife's children by other fathers than her husband. It was from usages such as these that domestic life rose throughout Europe to its later and more elevated forms; but in Ireland the evolution was so slow as to remain for centuries almost imperceptible. In the same way life remained wholly pastoral or agricultural. Among the native tribes no approach was made to collective life in towns. Though the Irish village system differed little in form from the system which was a general heritage of the Aryan race, and which we have seen prevailing among our English forefathers, it remained based more on community of kindred than on community of land. Political life showed the same slowness of advance as social life. In the earlier Aryan community the chief seems to have been at once ruler, priest, and judge. In Ireland, as in Gaul, he remained simply ruler, while the professional lawmen or Brehons preserved and declared the mass of traditional customs which constituted Irish law. The structure of the nation remained purely tribal to the last days of its independence. We see indeed a faint tendency to union which elsewhere would have brought about a real national life. Common ties of descent sometimes bound tribes in confederacies like those which gathered at an early date round a common king of Cashel; sometimes weak tribes grouped themselves round stronger, such as the O'Neils or the O'Donels at a later date in the north. From time to time even the

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promise of a national sovereignty rose out of the chaos of political life. But it never proved more than a promise. Traditional feeling owned the right to a general overlordship as existing in descendants of the house of Nial; legal theory gave this king of Ireland a king's seat at Tara, assigned to him Meath as his special domain, and asserted his right to receive tributes of cattle from lower chieftains. But strong as was the hold of this tradition, the supremacy of the King of Meath never became a lasting or effective force in Irish history.

Their slow development.

The result of this peculiar temper of the Irish people was fated to be seen long ages after the time we have reached in the violent contrast which Ireland presented with other countries of the western world. To the Europe of the twelfth or the sixteenth century the island appeared simply a country of uncivilized barbarians. But neither in Irish politics nor in Irish society was there anything radically different from the political and social organization which we find in the early stages of other European communities. What distinguished Ireland from other nations was the slowness of its development as compared with theirs. Usages which elsewhere marked a remote antiquity lingered on here into historic time. The Brehon of the thirteenth century defined the law which applied to the bastard child of a married woman as minutely as his predecessor had done in the fifth. Though private possession slowly made its way, the system of common possession lasted up to the age of the Tudors as the main social feature of the country, and then was only violently put an end to

by the English lawyers. Law went on in a customary form with little or no tendency to take statutory shape. The system of justice never advanced from the blood-fine which was originally common in all early races to any general jurisdiction of the tribe. Submission indeed even to the blood-fine, as to any form of judicial interposition, remained voluntary to the last among Irish disputants; and it was only by a complicated system of distress that they could be forced within the pale of the law. It was the same, as we have seen, with political life. In no tribe did any principle of real cohesion develope itself which could serve as the groundwork of national union. As in other lands, the chief increased in power as time went on by the creation of a class of vassals out of free tribesmen who sought or were forced to take grants of cattle, as well as from the settlement of refugees from one tribe within the boundaries of another. But to the last the power of the Irish chieftains remained as weak for any real purposes of government as it was effective for purposes of oppression.[1]

Patrick.

At the time when the first Englishmen invaded Britain, the Scots, as the people of Ireland were then called, were among the most formidable assailants of the island. In the raids of their pirate fleets on its shores or on those of Gaul thousands of the wretched provincials were swept off into slavery. Among these captives was a boy whose work was destined to leave a deep mark on the history and

[1] For the social condition of Ireland in these early times see Sir Henry Maine's "Early History of Institutions."

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character of the wild tribesmen who carried him from his native land. At the time of his capture Patricius, or as the more modern form of his name runs, Patrick,[1] was nearly sixteen years old; and for ten more years he remained in Ireland as a slave. The years were years of conversion to a deeper sense of heavenly things. As he tended his master's kine, the young herdsman would often rise before daylight to pray in woods and mountain, even amidst frost and snow; "and I felt no ill," he says, "nor was there any sloth within me, because, as I see now, the Spirit was burning in me."[2] At last a dream raised in him the longing for freedom; he fled from his master's hand; and after hard wanderings found himself at home again. But, years later, he was driven to return to the land of his slavery. "In dead of night," he writes, "I saw a man coming to me as if from Ireland, whose name was Victorinus, and who bore countless letters. And he gave me one of them, and I read the beginning of it, which contained the words, 'The voice of the Irish.' And while I was repeating the words of this beginning I thought I heard the voice of those who were near the wood Foclut, which is nigh to the western sea; and they cried thus: 'We pray thee, holy youth, to come and live among us henceforth.' And I was greatly pricked in heart, and could read no more."[3]

[1] For a full criticism of the materials for Patrick's life, see Dr. Todd's "St. Patrick."

[2] Confessio S. Patricii, ap. S. Patricii Opuscula, ed. Villanueva (Dublin, 1835), p. 190.

[3] Confessio S. Patricii, ibid. p. 194.

Patrick woke to obey the words of his dream. He was ordained priest and bishop, and again landed on the shores of Ireland. But from the moment of his landing his life is lost in clouds of poetic legend. His work, however, was manfully done. By him or by his followers the island was quickly won for the faith of Christ: chieftains were converted, schools, churches, and monasteries were set up in every quarter. But the form which the new communion took was widely different from that which it took in other countries of the West. Elsewhere Christianity had been above all the religion of the Roman Empire. As it mastered the Roman provinces its organization moulded itself on the organization of the state. The administrative divisions of the one became the ecclesiastical divisions of the other. The prefect and vicar of the Empire were reflected in the archbishop and bishop of the Church. The town with its dependent tract of country became the diocese. The law-court was often turned into the church. Christianity was localized, organized, with officers, law, and discipline of its own, working side by side with and in fixed relation to the civil organization of the empire which adopted it. But in Ireland it found a very different sphere of action. Ireland had never formed a part of the Empire; and instead of the centralized system of Imperial government, the missionaries found there, as we have seen, a mass of tribes linked together only by force or a vague tradition into varying groups around a central king, chieftains whose authority was personal over their clansmen rather than territorial over any definite tract of country, a land without towns or centres

Conversion of Ireland.

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of civil judicature, or more than a crude though minute system of traditional law.

Character of Irish Church.

Little as we know of the first Christian missionaries in Ireland, we see from its results that their work moulded itself with a curious fidelity on the social forms which the island offered.[1] The conversion of every chieftain was followed by the adhesion of his tribe, and a tribal character was given from the outset to the nascent church. The monastic impulse which was becoming dominant in the Christian world at the time told nowhere with greater force. The Irish churches took a monastic form; and the helpers and successors of Patrick became from the first abbots, each of them surrounded by a community of monks. But these monastic bodies were only centres of a tribal organization. In other countries of the West endowments of land fell to the local churches as they fell to guilds and voluntary civil societies of a similar class, and these endowments set them in the same rank of local corporations. In Ireland the grants given to the new monasteries and their superiors raised the abbot into the head of an artificial clan. He and his successors were not only heads of the spiritual community which gathered around them and was supported by these endowments, but chiefs of the new family in its civil capacity, and its bishops in a more spiritual aspect. As these ecclesiastical clans grew larger and more numerous their form modified itself, but still in the same peculiar way. Sometimes the successors of the original abbot divided his lay and spiritual authority. In such a case the

[1] Todd, "Life of St. Patrick," Introd.

community owned both a religious and a secular head. The spiritual coarb or heir, as the abbot was significantly called, was chosen by the monks over whom he presided, and the secular coarb by the tribesmen at large; though in both instances custom tended to restrict the choice to the family of the original founder. The office of bishop, too, generally detached itself from that of abbot and sank into a subordinate position. Without defined diocese or territorial position, the Irish bishops were at last distinguished from the rest of the clergy by no other marks than their possession of the strictly spiritual powers of consecration. Their number was enormous. Patrick was said to have consecrated more than three hundred, and a few centuries later they were believed to have reached seven hundred. As they had neither settled dioceses nor settled endowments their life was one of poverty and lowliness. A bishop might be found ploughing his own field by his own church. Another might be seen wandering with a pet cow at his heels through the country, without support save from the fees he charged for ordination. On the other hand, abbots of great monasteries like those of Durrow or Clonmacnois ranked among the great powers of the land. Kings quailed before their spiritual threats; they formed political combinations, and at need led kinsfolk or tribesmen to the field.

Character of Irish Christianity.

While other churches of Western Christendom were organized on a national and episcopal basis, the Irish Church was thus at once tribal and monastic. Nor was it less different from them in character than in form. In its temper as in its organization it was

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purely Celtic. The work of its conversion was hardly over when the conquest of Britain by the English cut off Ireland from the western world, and hindered the new community of religion from bringing it into contact with the general temper of European civilization. Save the little group of its first missionaries, even its earliest preachers were pure Irishmen, and the Church they founded grew up purely Irish in spirit as in form. The Celtic passion, like the Celtic anarchy, stamped itself on Irish religion. There was something strangely picturesque in its asceticism, in its terrible penances, its life-long fasts, its sudden contrasts of wrath and pity, the sweetness and tenderness of its legends and hymns, the awful vindictiveness of its curses. But in good as in ill its type of moral conduct was utterly unlike that which Christianity elsewhere developed. It was wanting in moral earnestness, in the sense of human dignity, in self-command; it showed little power over the passions of anger and revenge; it recognized spiritual excellence in a rigid abstinence from sensual excess and the repetition of countless hymns and countless litanies. But on the other hand Ireland gave to Christianity a force, a passionateness, a restless energy, such as it had never known before. It threw around it something of the grace, the witchery, the romance of the Irish temper. It coloured even its tenderness with the peculiar pathos of the Celt.

Its poetry.

The extravagance of the Irish saint-legends is broken everywhere by gleams of a delicate evanescent poetry. When the host of King Loegaire closes round Patrick to kill him and his comrades, the eight missionaries

vanish with the boy who followed them, and the host sees but eight roe-deer and a fawn tripping away to pasture. At another time two of the king's daughters, Fedelm the Red and Ethne the White, come down to a river-side to wash after the manner of women, and find there the group of wandering preachers.[1] "They knew not whence they came nor from what people, but took them for fairy-folk of the hills or earth, gods or phantoms." Patrick taught them his faith and baptized them; but his words woke a strange longing in the girls' hearts, and they asked to see the face of Christ. "And Patrick said: 'Ye cannot see the face of Christ save ye taste of death and take the Sacrifice of the Lord.' Then they bade him give it them. And they received God's eucharist and slept in death; and they were laid out both in one bed covered with their garments, and men made great dole and weeping over them." It is this peculiar tenderness that gives its charm to the love of living things that colours the legends of Celtic saints. The Irish hermit talks with the sea-birds who scream round his strip of sand-bank. Colomba sits watching his reapers in the field and caressing the head which a horse that had been feeding hard by comes to thrust into his lap.[2] The legend of Patrick linked an instance of his charity to animals with the foundation of Armagh. When he came to the spot he had chosen for his settlement, he found a roe with her fawn lying in the place where the altar of his church was afterwards to stand. His followers

[1] Extract from Book of Armagh, in Todd's "St. Patrick," p. 452.
[2] Adamnan, "Life of Columba," ed. Reeves, p. 231.

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would have slain them, "but Patrick would not." He took up the fawn himself, carrying it on his shoulder; and the roe followed him like a pet lamb till he had laid down her fawn in another field.

Irish Missions.

It was this strange Christianity, strange alike in temper and in form, which began in the seventh century to leaven in a hundred different ways the Christianity of the West. When it burst upon Western Christendom, it brought with it an enthusiasm, an energy, a learning greater than any that it found there. For while in Italy or Gaul or Spain Christianity had spent its vigour in a struggle for self-preservation against the heathen invaders, in winning them to its creed, in taming them by its discipline, in bringing to bear on them the civilization which it had alone preserved through the storm of conquest, Ireland, unscourged by assailants, drew from its conversion a life and movement such as it has never known since. The science and Biblical knowledge which fled from the Continent took refuge in famous schools which made Durrow and Armagh Universities of the West. The new Christain life soon beat too strongly to brook confinement within the bounds of Ireland itself. Patrick had not been a century dead when Irish Christianity flung itself with a fiery zeal into battle with the mass of heathenism which was rolling in elsewhere upon the Christian world. Irish missionaries laboured among the Picts of the Highlands and among the Frisians of the northern seas. An Irish missionary, Columban, founded monasteries in Burgundy and the Apennines. The Canton of St. Gall still commemorates in its

name another Irish missionary before whom the spirits of flood and fell fled wailing over the waters of the Lake of Constance. For a time it seemed as if the course of the world's history was to be changed, as if the older Celtic race that Roman and German had driven before them had turned to the moral conquest of their conquerors, as if Celtic and not Latin Christianity was to mould the destinies of the Churches of the West.

Irish missionaries in Northumbria.

On a low island of barren gneiss-rock off the west coast of Scotland the Irishman Colom or Colomba set up a mission station for the Picts at Hii;[1] and it was within the walls of this monastery that Oswald with his brothers had found refuge on their father's fall.[2] As soon as he was master of Northumbria, he naturally called for missionaries from among its monks. The first preacher sent in answer to his call obtained small success: he declared indeed on his return that among a people so stubborn and barbarous as these Northumbrian folk success was impossible. "Was it their stubbornness, or your harshness?" asked Aidan, a brother sitting by; "did you forget God's word to give them the milk first and then the meat?"[3] All eyes turned on the speaker as fittest to undertake the abandoned mission, and Aidan sailing at their bidding fixed his bishop's stool or see in 635 on the coast of Northumbria, in the island-peninsula of Lindisfarne.[4] Thence, from a monastery

[1] Adamnan, "Life of Columba," ed. Reeves, p. 434.
[2] Bæda, H. E. lib. iii. c. 3.
[3] Bæda, H. E. lib. iii. c. 5. The name in Irish form is Aedhan.
[4] Bæda, H. E. lib. iii. c. 3.

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which gave to the spot its after name of Holy Island, preachers poured forth over the heathen realm. Boisil guided a little troop of missionaries to the valley of the Tweed. Aidan himself wandered on foot, preaching among the peasants of Bernicia. In his own court the king acted as interpreter to the Irish missionaries in their efforts to convert his thegns.[1] A new conception of kingship indeed began to blend itself with that of the warlike glory of Æthelfrith or the wise administration of Eadwine, and the moral power which was to reach its height in Ælfred first dawns in the story of Oswald. For after times the memory of Oswald's greatness was lost in the memory of his piety. "By reason of his constant habit of praying or giving thanks to the Lord he was wont wherever he sat to hold his hands upturned on his knees."[2] As he feasted with Bishop Aidan by his side the thegn whom he had set to give alms to the poor at his gate told him of a multitude that waited fasting without. The king at once bade the untasted meat be carried to the poor and his silver dish be divided piecemeal among them. Aidan seized the royal hand and blessed it. "May this hand," he cried, "never grow old!"[3]

Oswald.

But if Oswald was a saint, he was none the less resolved to build up again a power such as that of Eadwine. His earlier efforts to widen his dominion seem to have been mainly in the north-west. Here his sway not only stretched over the Britons who

[1] Bæda, H. E. lib. iii. c. 3.
[2] Bæda, H. E. lib. iii. c. 12.
[3] Bæda, H. E. lib. iii. c. 6.

formed the mass of the population in the district between Chester and the Ribble, but it is probable that he was owned as overlord by the Welsh kingdom of Strath-Clyde; for otherwise he could hardly have gone on to "receive into his lordship"[1] the Picts and the Dalriad Scots across the Forth. In southern Britain his success seems to have been more chequered. It may be doubted whether Mercia or the tribes along the Trent yielded more than a nominal submission to him,[2] but Penda must have shrunk for the while from any open struggle, for at the pressure of Oswald[3] he murdered Eadfrid, the second son of Eadwine by his Mercian wife Quænburh, who had for a while found refuge at his court. Kent too yielded to the same pressure, and drove Eadwine's children by Æthelberga to a refuge in Gaul.[4] In these realms, however, Oswald could hardly claim any direct overlordship, but elsewhere he was able to restore the realm of Eadwine. His arms wrested an acknowledgment of subjection from the Lindiswaras, after a struggle whose fierceness was shown by the bitter memory it left behind it among the conquered people.[5] East-Anglia, which had remained Christian amidst the heathen reaction

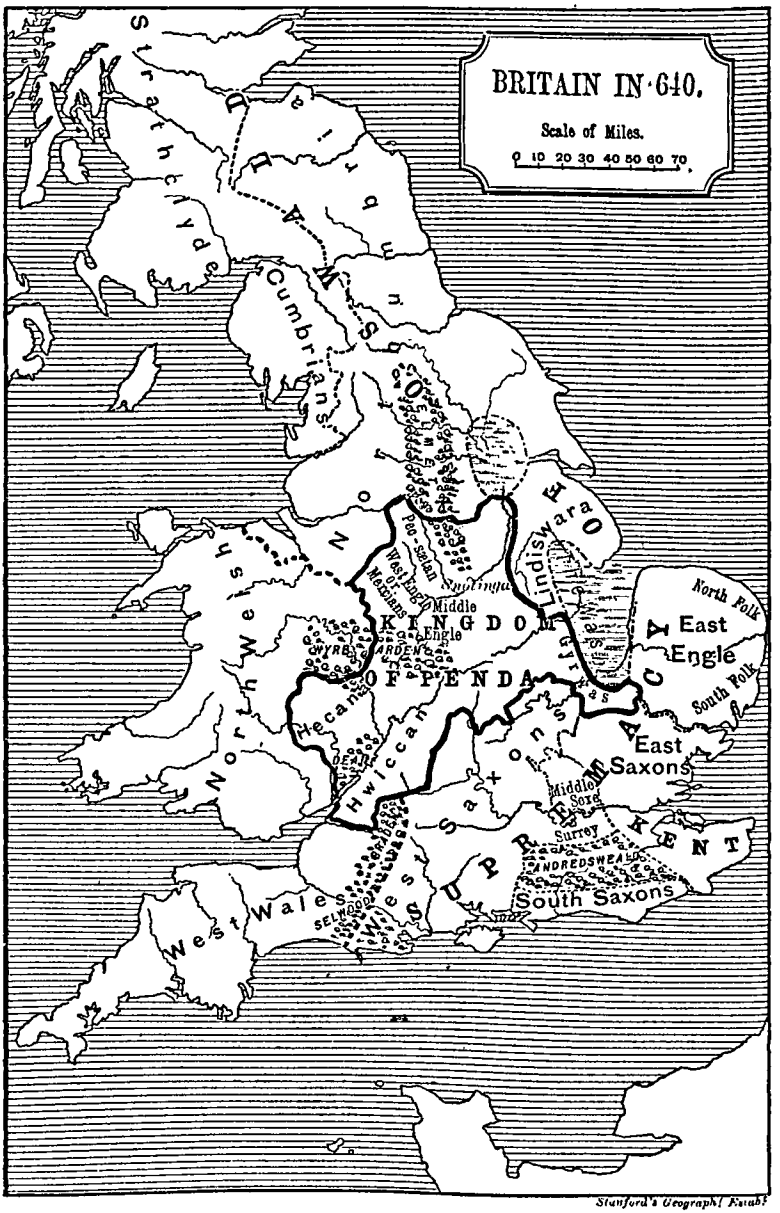
[1] "Omnes nationes et provincias Brittanniæ, quæ in quatuor linguas, id est: Brittonum, Pictorum, Scottorum, et Anglorum, divisæ sunt, in ditione accepit."—Bæda, H. E. lib. iii. c. 6.

[2] Some submission there must have been, for Bæda says that Oswald "hisdem finibus regnum tenuit" as Eadwine, which he has carefully specified. (H. E. ii. c. 5.)

[3] Bæda, H. E. lib. ii. c. 20.

[4] Bæda, H. E. lib. ii. c. 20.

[5] Bæda, H. E. lib. iii. c. 11.


BRITAIN IN 640.
Scale of Miles.
0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70
Strathclyde
Britons
Cumbrians
DAMNONIA
Northwealh
West Wales
Pec-Saxon
West Engle
Middle Engle
Mercians
KINGDOM OF PENDA
Hecanas
Hwiccan
Lindiswara
Gyrwas
East Engle
North Folk
South Folk
East Saxons
Middle Saxons
Surrey
KENT
South Saxons
West Saxons
SUPRÆ
Stanford's Geograph! Estab!

elsewhere, after the fall of Eadwine, seems still to have remained subject to Penda; but in the south Oswald succeeded in effectually restoring the Northumbrian supremacy. The battle of Cirencester and the loss of the country of the Hwiccas had taught the West-Saxons to look on Mercia as their most dangerous foe: and they were ready to seek aid against it in recognizing the overlordship of Oswald. Here again the new religion served as a prelude to the Northumbrian advance. Immediately after the victory of the Hevenfeld, in 635, Wessex declared itself Christian. The work of a preacher, Birinus, who had penetrated from Gaul into Wessex, proved so effective that king Cynegils received baptism in Oswald's presence and established with his assent a see for his people in the royal city of Dorchester on the Thames.[1]

Battle of the Maserfeld.

It was this supremacy over so wide a ring of subject peoples which seemed to lift Oswald out of the rank of Kings. In him, even more than in Eadwine, men saw some faint likeness of the older Emperors. Once indeed, a writer from the land of the Picts, the abbot Adamnan of Hii, calls Oswald "Emperor of the whole of Britain."[2] But great as he was, the doom of Oswald was fated to be that of Eadwine. Though the conversion of Wessex had prisoned it within the central districts of England, heathendom fought desperately for life. Penda remained its rallying-point; and the long reign of the Mercian king was in fact one continuous battle with the Cross. But so

[1] Bæda, H. E. lib. iii. c. 7.

[2] Adamnan's "Life of Columba," ed. Reeves, p. 16.

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far as we can judge from his acts, Penda seems to have looked on the strife of religion in a purely political light. Christianity meant in fact either subjection to, or alliance with, Oswald; and the Northumbrian supremacy was again threatening his dominion on almost every border when Penda resolved to break through the net which was closing round him. The point of conflict, as before, seems to have been the dominion over East-Anglia. Its possession was as vital to Mid-Britain as it was to Northumbria, which needed it to link itself with its West-Saxon subjects in the south; and Oswald must have felt that he was challenging his rival to a decisive combat when he marched, in 642, to deliver the East-Anglians from Penda. But his doom was that of Eadwine; for he was overthrown and slain in a battle called the battle of the Maserfeld.[1] His last words showed how deeply the spirit of the new faith was telling on the temper of Englishmen. The last thought of every northern warrior as he fell had till now been a hope that kinsmen would avenge his death upon his slayers. The king's last words, as he saw himself girt about with blood-thirsty foes, passed into a proverb: "God have mercy on their souls, as Oswald said ere he fell."[2] His body was mutilated and his limbs set on stakes by the brutal conqueror;[3] but legend told that, when all else of Oswald had perished, the hand that Aidan had blessed still remained white and uncorrupted.[4]

[1] Engl. Chron. a. 642; Bæda, H. E. lib. iii. c. 9.
[2] Bæda, H. E. iii. 12.
[3] Bæda, H. E. iii. 13.
[4] Bæda, H. E. lib. iii. 6.

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Oswiu.

For a few years after his victory at the Maserfeld Penda stood supreme in Britain. Wessex must have been forced to own his supremacy;[1] for its king, Cenwealh, threw off the Christian faith and married Penda's sister. East-Anglia and Central Britain remained under Mercian sway, while the Northumbrian realm was a third time broken up, for even the men of Deira seem to have bent their necks to Penda, and Oswini, the son of Osric, whom they took for their king in a rising on Oswald's fall, was a mere under-king of the Mercian overlord.[2] Bernicia alone refused to yield. Year by year Penda carried his ravages over the north; once he reached even the royal city, the impregnable rock-fortress of Bamborough. Despairing of success in an assault, he pulled down the cottages around, and, piling their wood against its walls, fired the mass in a fair wind that drove the flames on the town. "See, Lord, what ill Penda is doing,"[3] cried Aidan from his hermit cell in the islet of Farne, as he saw the smoke drifting over the city; and a change of wind—so ran the legend of Northumbria's agony—drove back at the words the flames on those who kindled them. But, burnt and harried as it was, Bernicia still clung to the Cross. Oswiu, a third son of Æthelfrith, who had been called from Hii in 642 to fill the throne of his brother Oswald, gave little promise in his earlier days of those qualities which were to make his later reign a landmark in our history.[4] During the first

[1] Bæda, H. E. lib. iii. c. 7.
[2] Bæda, H. E. lib. iii. c. 14.
[3] Bæda, H. E. lib. iii. c. 16.
[4] Bæda, H. E. lib. iii. c. 14.

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nine years of his reign indeed, he was king only of Bernicia, and over Bernicia the host of Penda poured summer after summer in the terrible raids which we have described. But terrible as they were, Oswiu held stoutly to his ground; and after some years he found himself not only master of his own people, but able to build up again the wider realm of the Northumbrians.

Restoration of Northumbria.

Oswini, who had occupied the Deiran throne since the fight at the Maserfeld, was a son of that Osric who had reigned for the miserable year which followed Eadwine's defeat at Hæthfeld. But the religious activity of Oswald and of Aidan had done its work. Unlike his father, Oswini was a Christian to the core; and his piety and humility won the love of Aidan, as his personal beauty and liberality won the love of his people.[1] But neither the one love nor the other could avert the young king's doom. A marriage which Oswiu concluded showed his purpose of recovering Deira. Eadwine's younger children by his Kentish queen had been carried by her after her fall to her Kentish home;[2] and the death of two of them left the girl Eanfled the representative of his line. Oswiu took Eanfled to wife as his father Æthelfrith had taken her aunt Acha; and in the one case as in the other the match had a political aim, that of neutralizing the loyalty of the men of Deira to the line of Ælla. It was in fact followed in 651 by the march of the Bernician king to the south. The news of Oswiu's approach with an overpowering

[1] Bæda, H. E. lib. iii. c. 14.

[2] Bæda, ii. 20. Really two children and one grandchild.

host filled Oswini with despair, a despair quickened no doubt by consciousness of the treachery which was at work among his subjects; he fled to the house of an Ealderman near Richmond, and was betrayed by him to a thegn whom Oswiu despatched to kill him.[1] The blow broke Aidan's heart; and twelve days after it the bishop lay dying among his brethren at Lindisfarne. Far off, on the sheep-walks of the Lammermoor, a shepherd-boy named Cuthbert, destined afterwards to a wider fame, saw stars falling thick over the sky into the sea, and took them for angels carrying homeward the soul of Bishop Aidan. But the fall of Oswini left Oswiu master of Deira; and Northumbria rose anew from the union of the two northern states, a union which was never henceforth to be dissolved. Oswini was the last male of the old kingly stock of Deira; and with the extinction of their regal line passed away the reluctance of the Deirans to submit to the house of Ida. The restoration of the Northumbrian realm left Oswiu supreme from the Humber to the Forth; and a great part of the Welsh, of the Picts, and of the Scots, on his western and northern border, not only bowed to his overlordship as they had bowed to Oswald's, but even owned their subjection by payment of tribute.[2]

Oswiu and Penda.

But the reconstruction of the Northumbrian kingdom was hardly brought about when a succession of events in central Britain showed that Oswiu had taken up again the wider task of Oswald and Eadwine. In the year after the annexation of Deira, in 652,[3]

[1] Bæda, H. E. iii. c. 14.

[2] Bæda, H. E. ii. 5.

[3] Bæda does not date the wooing of Penda or the conversion

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Penda's son Peada, whom his father had set as under-king over the Middle-English or Leicestermen, sought Oswiu's daughter Alchfleda to wife. The two royal houses were already linked by marriage, for Penda's daughter was the wife of Oswiu's son, Alchfrith; and Alchfrith's persuasion won over Peada to Christianity as the price of his sister's hand. He was baptized by Bishop Finan, Aidan's successor in the See of Lindisfarne,[1] and the priests whom Peada brought back with him preached busily and successfully not only among his own subjects, but ventured in the following year to penetrate even among the Mercians themselves. Penda gave them no hindrance. In words which mark the temper of a man of whom we would willingly know more, Bæda tells us that the old king[2] only "hated and scorned those whom he saw not doing the works of the faith they had received."[3] "They were miserable and scornworthy men," he said, "who shrank from obeying the God in whom they trusted." His attitude proves that Penda looked with the tolerance of his race on all questions of creed, and that he fought not for heathendom, but for independence. If he struck down Eadwine and Oswald, it was not because their missionaries spread along the eastern

of the Mid-Engle, but as they followed the annexation of Deira and preceded the further attempts to convert the Mercians themselves, which he puts in 653 ("cœpta sunt hæc biennio ante mortem Pendæ regis," Bæda, H. E. lib. iii. c. 21), we must assign them to 652.

[1] Bæda, H. E. lib. iii. c. 21.

[2] If he was fifty at his accession in 626, he was nearly eighty when he fell at the Winwæd.

[3] Bæda, H. E. lib. iii. c. 21.

coast, but because their lordship spread with their missionaries. Quietly therefore as he watched the spread of the new religion among his own people, he may have watched with jealousy the conversion of Essex, which took place in the same year that the Northumbrian preachers appeared on the upper Trent. The throwing off of Christianity and of the Kentish supremacy by the two young kings of the East-Saxons in the days of Bishop Mellitus had been quickly followed by their fall in a disastrous conflict with the West-Sexe;[1] but we do not again catch sight of the little realm till we find at this moment its king Sigeberht a friend and guest of Oswiu's in the king's vill by the Roman Wall. The pressure of Oswiu[2] brought about Sigeberht's baptism and conversion, and his return to his people was followed by Oswiu's despatch of the missionary Cedd, who was working among the Middle-Engle, to this new work on the eastern coast.[3]

Penda and the East-Engle.

The extension of Oswiu's influence over Essex was obviously a prelude to a renewal of the old strife between Penda and Northumbria for the domination over East-Anglia. Now as before the supremacy over

[1] Bæda, H. E. lib. ii. c. 5. The Gewissas may have been tempted to replace Æthelberht's overlordship by their own, or it is possible that the strife sprang simply from the loose and unfixed character of the frontier between the two peoples. (See Stubbs in Dic. Christ. Biog. vol. ii. 20.) The liberty of S. Alban's may represent the waste "mark" between East- and West-Sexe.

[2] Bæda, H. E. lib. iii. c. 22, "instantia regis Oswiu."

[3] Bæda, H. E. lib. iii. c. 22. Cedd's movements fix the date of these events in 653.

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East-Anglia was essential to the wider supremacy of Northumbria over the centre of the island. For the new state of Mid-Britain it was more; it was a question of life and death. Without the East-Engle the power which had again and again grouped itself round Æthelberht and Rædwald and Penda must cease to exist. On the other hand the East-Engle were still averse from the rule of their fellow Engle in the west; and now that dependencies of Oswiu's lay on either side of them they would naturally begin to stir. There can be little doubt that Penda's fresh[1] attack on them in 654, an attack in which Sigeberht's successor Anna was slain and his kingdom cruelly ravaged, was the result of a fresh attempt at revolt. A third brother, Æthelhere, bowed anew to the Mercian yoke, and marched among the soldiers of Penda. Æthelhere, we know not how, was the cause of the war[2] which followed with Northumbria. It is possible that the under-king endeavoured to win independence by playing off the two great powers on either side of him against one another. But that Oswiu strove to avert the conflict we see from the delivery of his youngest son Ecgfrith as a hostage into Penda's hands. The sacrifice however proved useless. Penda was again the assailant, and his attack was as vigorous as of old. He was aided too by internal dissension in the Northumbrian realm. Oidilwald, a son of Oswald, had been set by Oswiu[3] as an under-king over at least part of Deira; but in this crisis

[1] Bæda, H. E. lib. iii. c. 18. For date, see Hussey's note.

[2] "Auctor ipse belli."—Bæda, H. E. lib. iii. c. 24.

[3] Bæda, H. E. lib. iii. c. 23, 24.

he joined the Mercians, and his defection opened a way for Penda's march into the heart of the land.

Battle of the Winwæd.

The old king again passed ravaging over the country as far northward as Bamborough, "destroying all he could with fire and sword;"[1] while Oswiu, unable to meet him in the field, was driven by need to seek for peace. Penda however set roughly aside the gifts which the king offered; he had resolved, so men believed, to root out and destroy the whole people of the Northumbrians. But broken as they were, despair gave strength to the men of the north. A small host gathered round Oswiu, and the king vowed—should the day be his—to give his daughter to God and to found twelve monasteries. "Since the pagan will not take our gifts," he said, "let us offer them to One that will." Success however seemed hopeless, for when Oswiu met the Mercian army near the river Winwæd in 655 he found it thrice as strong as his own. Thirty ealdormen followed Penda; Ælthelhere brought his East Anglians to his aid, and Oidilwald the men of Eastern Deira. Never had the odds seemed more unequal, but never was an overthrow more complete. Oidilwald proved as faithless to Penda as he had proved to Oswiu; he drew off his men in the midst of the fight and waited for its issue. It ended in the rout and slaughter of the Mercians. Great rains had swelled the river in the rear of their broken host, "and more were drowned in their flight than fell by the sword." But the noblest of the Mercian warriors remained on the field.[2] Of the thirty

[1] Bæda, H. E. lib. iii. c. 17. [2] Bæda, H. E. lib. iii. c. 24.

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ealdormen who marched at Penda's bidding hardly one was left alive, Æthelhere fell fighting in the midst of his East-Englishmen, and Penda himself was slain. "In the river Winwæd," rang out the triumphant battle-song of the conquerors :—

> "In the river Winwæd is avenged the slaughter of Anna,
> The slaughter of the kings Sigberht and Ecgrice,
> The slaughter of the kings Oswald and Edwine." [1]

Fall of Mercia.

For the moment the ruin of Mercia seemed complete. The supremacy it had won over its neighbours to the south must have passed away with the great defeat. The West-Saxons resumed their old independence, and the force which they gained from this deliverance spurred them to take up again their long interrupted advance against the Britons in the west. In 655 a victory at Bradford on the Avon drove the Welsh from their stronghold in the woodlands which ran like a wedge into West-Saxon land up the valley of the Frome, and a second campaign three years later settled the West-Saxons as conquerors round the sources of the Parrett. But the loss of outer influence was little beside the internal ruin of the Mercian state itself. The power which had grown up in Central Britain crumbled beneath Oswiu's blow. The peoples whom Penda had brought together sheered off into their old isolation. East-Anglia, the actual prize of the contest, naturally found a new overlord in Oswiu. Lindsey passed under the direct rule of the Northumbrian conqueror, and if the Southumbrians

[1] Huntingdon, Hist. Angl., ed. Arnold, p. 60, has preserved this snatch of English song.

about Nottingham escaped the same fate, it was by their revival as a distinct kingdom, though subject, no doubt, to the overlord in the north. The removal of Peada from his sovereignty over the Middle-English of Leicester shows that these too, probably with their neighbours the South-English of Northampton, were freed from the supremacy of Mercia. The Mercian people itself, reduced as it thus was to its original settlement along the upper Trent, lost its national unity. Its old division into a North-Mercian and a South-Mercian folk reappeared,[1] whether from civil strife which followed on the great defeat, or as a part of the policy of their conqueror. The larger part of the Mercian people, the North-Mercians who dwelt on the north side of the Trent, were made directly subject to Northumbria. The South-Mercians alone remained under the rule of Peada; but Peada only received his kingship over them as a gift from Oswiu,[2] and that not because he was of the kingly stock, but because he was bound to Oswiu by the ties of his marriage and his Christian faith.

Supremacy of Oswiu.

Oswiu on the other hand was sovereign over Britain as no English king save Eadwine had been before him.[3] The supremacy of Northumbria over the

[1] Bæda, H. E. lib. iii. 24.

[2] Bæda, H. E. lib. iii. c. 24: "Donavit (Oswiu) Peada .... eo quod esset cognatus suus, regnum australium Merciorum."

[3] Bæda, lib. iii. c. 24: "Tribus annis post occisionem Pendan regis, Merciorum genti, necnon et cæteris australium provinciarum populis præfuit, qui etiam gentem Pictorum maxima ex parte regno Anglorum subjecit." So Bæda, H. E. ii. 5, says of Oswiu: "Æqualibus pene terminis (as those of Oswald and Eadwine), regnum nonnullo tempore coercens, Pictorum quoque atque

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Britons of Cumbria and Strath-Clyde was restored. The Picts and Scots of the north were forced to pay tribute. In Mid-Britain Oswiu no longer saw a power growing fast into a danger, but a mass of broken peoples, all of them in some way owing him obedience. Over Lindsey, the men of North-Mercia, and the South-English, he must have ruled for the moment in direct sovereignty;[1] while the petty kingdom of the Southumbrians, the larger realms of the East-Anglians and the East-Saxons, probably the West-Saxons themselves, owned his supremacy. Northumbria itself too was finally made. The royal stock of Deira had come to an end, and with its extinction passed away the strife between the men of Bernicia. From Oswiu's day all the Englishmen of the north were simply Northumbrians, and this inner unity gave fresh weight to the political influence which the kingdom exerted outside its own bounds.

Revival of Mercia.

But the dream of a single people gathered together around the kings of Northumbria no sooner seemed realized than it vanished for ever away. Peada had scarcely received the gift of the South-Mercian realm when his death tempted Oswiu to complete his mastery of Central Britain by annexing even the small folk that the young king had ruled. For three years the Mercians bore this foreign rule; but in 659 the whole people broke out in revolt, drove

Scottorum gentes, quæ septemtrionales Brittaniæ fines tenent, maximâ ex parte perdomuit ac tributarias fecit."

[1] "Ipso (Penda) occiso, cum Oswiu rex Christianus regnum ejus acciperet."—Bæda, H. E. lib. iii. c. 21.

BRITAIN IN 658.
Scale of Miles.
0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70
Strathclyde
Cumbria
Northumbria
Deira
Bernicia
Lindisfara
Hwicca
Magonsæte
Wrocensæte
Pecsætan
Lindsey
North Folk
East Engle
South Folk
Middle Engle
South Engle
Hecana
Hwicca
East Saxons
Middle Sexe
Surrey
KENT
South Saxons
West Wales
North Wales
West Saxons
Stanford's Geograph! Estab!

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Oswiu's thegns from the land, and raised a younger son of Penda, who had till now remained in hiding, to the throne.[1] Under its new king, Wulfhere, Mercia rose at once into a power greater than that of Penda; and which it would need a greater victory than that of the Winwæd to overthrow. But the revolution marked more than the revival of Mercia. It marked the abandonment by Northumbria of her long efforts to carry her supremacy over the rest of Britain. So irresistible had been the movement of revolt that Oswiu seems to have acquiesced without a struggle in the overthrow of his rule, and to have contented himself for the few remaining years of his life with a nominal overlordship across the Humber. Even this passed away at his death in 670; and his successors sank into merely local sovereigns.[2] Whatever bicker-

[1] Bæda, H. E. lib. iii. c. 24.

[2] Bæda, lib. ii., ends his list of those who held an imperium with Oswiu. Æthelberht of Kent "tertius quidem in regibus gentis Anglorum, cunctis australibus eorum provinciis quæ Humbræ fluvio et contiguis ei terminis sequestrantur a borealibus imperavit; sed primus omnium cælestia regna conscendit. Nam primus imperium hujusmodi Ælli rex Australium Saxonum; secundus Cælin rex Occidentalium Saxonum, qui linguâ eorum Ceaulin vocabatur; tertius, ut dixi, Ædilberct rex Cantuariorum; quartus Redwald rex Orientalium Anglorum, qui etiam vivente Ædilbercto eidem suæ genti ducatum præbebat, obtinuit; quintus Æduin rex Nordanhymbrorum gentis, id est, ejus quæ ad borealem Humbræ fluminis plagam inhabitat, majore potentia cunctis qui Brittaniam incolunt, Anglorum pariter et Brittonum populis præfuit, præter Cantuariis tantum; necnon et Mevanias Brittonum insulas, quæ inter Hiberniam et Brittaniam sitæ sunt, Anglorum subjecit imperio; sextus Osuald et ipse Nordanhymbrorum rex Christianissimus, hisdem finibus regnum tenuit; septimus Oswiu frater ejus, æqualibus

ings over a border province there might be with Mercia, no Northumbrian king from that time made any effort

pene terminis regnum nonnullo tempore coercens, Pictorum quoque atque Scottorum gentes, quæ septemtrionales Brittaniæ fines tenuit, maxima ex parte perdomuit, ac tributarias fecit" (Bæda, H. E. lib. ii. c. 5). In the middle of the ninth century the clerk of Winchester who threw together the earlier entries of the English Chronicle, when he reached his entry for the year 827, "In this year king Ecgberht conquered the Mercian kingdom and all that was south of Humber," added, "and he was the eighth king that was Bretwalda." Then copying from Bæda this list of names from Ælla to Oswiu he adds at the close of it, "the eighth was Ecgberht, king of the West-Saxons." The two passages together form the ground of Sir F. Palgrave's theory of a derivation of the Roman imperial authority through Maximus, &c., to Ælla and Ecgberht, which is examined and dismissed by Mr. Freeman ("Norman Conquest," vol. i. appendix, note B), and of Mr. Freeman's own theory of the Bretwaldadom, in which the imperium of Bæda is made to mean "a real though not an abiding or a very well-defined supremacy which was often, perhaps generally, held by some one of the Teutonic princes of Britain over as many of his neighbours, Celtic and Teutonic alike, as he could extend it over." The little word Celtic in this very cautiously expressed passage is no doubt big enough to serve as a base for the theory of an imperial character which Mr. Freeman attributes to the rule of the later West-Saxon kings through their supremacy over the Celtic peoples about them. Such a theory in the case of the later monarchy may be true or false; but in applying it to the kings in Bæda's list we seem to me to be going beyond the evidence we possess. As to the title Bretwalda, there is no ground for assuming it to be earlier than the date at which we first find it in the Chronicle, or for giving it, with Swithun's clerk, to these earlier rulers. The silence not only of Bæda but of every historical document or charter up to the ninth century is surely fatal to any theory of its official existence at this time. Nor can we attach any great weight to the historical knowledge of the writer who attributes it to Ælla and Oswiu, when we find that as soon as he comes to the end of Bæda's list the chronicler leaps over a

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to crush the rival states in Central or Southern Britain; the threefold division of the conquered land was

century and a half of our history, and over kings such as Æthelbald and Offa, to pin his own sovereign Ecgberht on to the close of it. But if we set aside the word Bretwalda, and the theories which I believe its incorrect rendering as "ruler of the Britons" first gathered round it, and restrict ourselves to the meaning of Bæda's Imperium, the matter becomes very much simpler. Bæda himself explains the Imperium as a Ducatus, the position that is of a here-toga or war-leader. There is no historic ground in the case of the first four kings in his list for extending such a war-leadership over any Britons at all. In the case of Ælla, indeed, Mr. Freeman admits such a supposition to be impossible. But the passages which show that in Ælla's later days the attacks of the Gewissas on the coast of the Gwent were supported by forces from Kent and Sussex make it at any rate possible that this union of the three peoples in their attack was under the war-leadership of this king, who must at that time have held the highest position among the conquering tribes. Of Ceawlin in this respect we know nothing; but Bæda has carefully defined for us the limits both of Æthelberht's and Rædwald's supremacy, and in neither case is any British people included within it. In their cases the imperium must have meant a supremacy or war-leadership over Englishmen alone; and it is in this sense, therefore, that we must apply the word to Eadwine, Oswald, and Oswiu, though these three Northumbrian kings undoubtedly had British peoples among their tributaries. I am inclined to think that the chronicler's entry came about in a very simple way. In the passage of Bæda which lay before him he read that Æthelberht, "cunctis australibus eorum provinciis qui Humbræ fluvio et contiguis ei terminis sequestrantur a borealibus imperavit." Here, as in so many cases throughout his book, Bæda is distinguishing between the "Nordanhymbri" and the "Sudanhymbri," the Engle north of the Humber, and the Engle south of it, to the exclusion of the Kentishmen and the various Saxon tribes. What he points out is, that it was over the southern Engle—the Engle that is of Mid-Britain or the later Mercia—that Æthelberht's imperium extended, and it was over the same district that Rædwald's

accepted as a settled fact by the statesmen of the north; and if they henceforth sought to widen their borders it was not by conquests over Englishmen, but by conquests over Cumbrian or Pict.

imperium extended after him. Now if we look at the chronicler's entry we shall see that it was not when the Kentishmen submitted to him in 823, or when he completed his conquests by the annexation of Northumbria, that the writer tags Ecgberht on to the Bretwaldas, but when in the interval between them he conquered "the kingdom of the Mercians and all that was south of the Humber." The chronicler's own words probably recalled to him Bæda's phrase about an imperium over "all the provinces south of the Humber," and in a very natural, if pedantic, way he at once linked on his hero to the list of Bæda's seven kings. This would account for his omission of names like that of Offa, so startling to Mr. Kemble; for from Oswiu's day to Ecgberht's day no one had made this particular conquest of Mercia, just because Mercia during this period had been the dominant power in southern Britain.

CHAPTER VII.

THE CHURCH AND THE KINGDOMS.

659—690.

The Church and the Nation.

WITH the failure of Northumbria the union of the conquerors of Britain in a single nation for the time became impossible. Far as the northern kingdom surpassed the rest in political and military developement; half a century of bitter struggle had failed to reveal in it such a preponderance of power as would force the states south of the Humber to bow to its permanent supremacy. That Mercia or Wessex should succeed where Northumbria had failed was as yet out of the question, and when Oswiu's realm withdrew into practical isolation, all hope of national union seemed to vanish away. But at this moment a new element began to play its part in English life. The battle of the Winwæd had proved a delusive triumph for Northumbria. But it was a decisive victory for the Cross. With it all active resistance on the part of the older heathendom came to an end. Christianity, which had gradually won recognition as a state religion in northern, eastern, and southern Britain, became with the submission of Mercia the

faith of the New England at large; and the worship of Woden only lingered for a few years to come in the petty and isolated kingdom of the South-Saxons, which lay severed from the rest of the island by the Andredsweald. The religious hopes of Gregory were realized in the subjection of Britain to the new faith, and the time had come for the carrying out of those plans which he had devised for its ecclesiastical administration. Nothing was more characteristic of Roman Christianity than its administrative organization. Its ordered hierarchy of bishops, priests, and lower clergy, its judicial and deliberative machinery, its courts and its councils, had become a part of its very existence, and settled with it on every land that it won. Gregory, as we have seen, had plotted out the yet heathen Britain into an ordered Church with two archbishoprics, each surrounded by twelve suffragan sees; and though the carrying out of this scheme in its actual form had proved impossible, yet it was certain that the first effort of the Roman see, now that the ground was clear, would be to replace it by some analogous arrangement. But no such religious organization could stamp itself on English soil without telling on the civil organization about it. The regular subordination of priest to bishop, of bishop to primate, in the administration of the Church, would supply a mould on which the civil organization of the state would unconsciously but irresistibly shape itself. The gatherings of the clergy in national synods would inevitably lead the way to national gatherings for civil legislation. Above all, if the nation in its spiritual capacity came

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to recognize the authority of a single primate, it would insensibly be led in its temporal capacity to recognize a single sovereign.

The Church in the North.

But the hopes of such an organization rested in the submission of the English states to the Church of Rome, and it was not the Church of Rome which had won the victory of the Winwæd, or which seemed likely to reap its fruits. After its efforts at extension under Æthelberht and Eadwine, the Roman mission had for a while sunk into a mere church of Kent; and though the Burgundian Felix, who had taken the lead in a mission to East-Anglia,[1] and Birinus, with his successor, the Frankish Bishop Agilberct, who were preaching in Wessex,[2] were both attached to the Roman communion, the recent and imperfect conversion of these countries gave them as yet little weight in the religious balance of the country. The real life and energy of the new Christianity were concentrated in the north, and the north looked for its religious centre, not to Rome, but to Ireland. Never was the connexion of Britain with Ireland closer than in the years that followed Penda's fall. The spell which it cast over Northumbria was irresistible.[3] To cross the Irish Channel, whether for piety or for learning, became a fashion in the north,[4] while fresh missionaries streamed over in turn

[1] Bæda, H. E. lib. ii. c. 15.

[2] Bæda, H. E. lib. iii. c. 7.

[3] We see an amusing proof of this in Bæda's statement that he had seen persons bitten by serpents cured by drinking water into which scrapings of the leaves of books that had been brought out of Ireland had been put. (Bæda, H. E. lib. i. c. 1.)

[4] Bæda, H. E. lib. iii. 7; iv. 3, 4; v. 9, 10.

to wander into the wildest spots where English heathendom found a hold. One solitary made his way as far as the South-Saxons.[1] Another settled among the East-Englishmen, and left his memory to a monastery in Suffolk.[2] Nor was the Northumbrian Church itself wanting in missionaries as ardent as these. The brothers Cedd and Ceadda, one the apostle of Essex,[3] the other of the Mercians, the St. Chadd to whom the Mercian see of Lichfield still looks as its founder, were only instances of the zeal of their day. So simple and lowly in temper was Ceadda that he travelled on foot in his mission journeys till Archbishop Theodore in later days lifted him with his own hands on horseback. The poetry of their early Christian enthusiasm breaks out in the death-legend that tells how voices of singers singing sweetly descended from heaven to a little cell beside St. Mary's Church where the Mercian bishop lay dying. Then "the same song ascended from the roof again, and returned heavenward by the same way that it came."[4]

Cuthbert.

But the work of these missionaries has been almost lost in the glory of Cuthbert.[5] No story better lights

[1] Dicul. Bæda, H. E. lib. iv. c. 13.

[2] Fursey. Bæda, H. E. lib. iii. c. 19.

[3] Bæda, H. E. lib. iii. c. 22, 23.

[4] Bæda, H. E. lib. iv. c. 3.

[5] For Cuthbert we have (*a*) an anonymous life by a contemporary (in Bæda, Opera Minora, ed. Stevenson, p. 259); (*b*) a life by Bæda, in some measure drawn from this, but with fresh information from contemporaries (in the same volume, p. 49); and Bæda's abstract of the latter in his Ecclesiastical History, b. iv. c. 27.

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up for us the religious life of the time than the story of this apostle of the Lowlands, a story that carries us into the northernmost part of Northumbria, into the country of the Teviot and the Tweed. Born on the southern edge of the Lammermoor, a line of dark uplands which runs eastward to the sea at Dunbar, Cuthbert found shelter at eight years old in the house of a widow who dwelt in the village of Wrangholm. In after years he loved to tell stories of his boyhood, of the strength and agility which made him the best runner and wrestler among the village children, of his quickness of wit, his love of laughter and fun.[1] But already his robust frame hid a poetic sensibility which caught even in the chance word of a game a call to higher things. An attack of lameness deepened the religious impression. It was for his sins, the boy thought, that God had chained and bound him; and a rider who came one day over the hill, mounted on a fine horse, and clad in the graceful white riding cloak which was common among the nobles of the time, seemed as he pitied and tended the injured limb an angel sent to bring forgiveness and health.[2] From that time Cuthbert's bent was to a religious life. It was of this that he dreamed as he kept his master's sheep on the bleak uplands whence the Leader flows into the Tweed, uplands still famous as a sheep-walk, though a scant herbage scarce veils the whinstone rock.[3] We see him for a while keeping watches of prayer in the night while his comrades sleep around, or in lonelier hours breaking the stillness

[1] Anon. Vit. p. 261. [2] Anon. Vit. p. 262.
[3] Anon. Vit. p. 263.

of the heights with hymns, or seeing in splendour of falling stars and northern lights angel-troops ascending and descending between earth and heaven. The news which was "noised far and wide" of Bishop Aidan's death woke him from this dream-life, and in 651 he made his way to a group of straw-thatched log-huts in the midst of an untilled solitude where a few Irish monks from Lindisfarne had settled in the mission-station of Melrose.[1]

His mission work.

To-day the land is a land of poetry and romance. Cheviot and Lammermoor, Ettrick and Teviotdale, Yarrow and Annan-water, are musical with old ballads and border minstrelsy. Agriculture has chosen its valleys for her favourite seat, and drainage and steam-power have turned sedgy marshes into farm and meadow. But to see the Lowlands as they were in Cuthbert's day we must sweep meadow and farm away again, and replace them by vast solitudes, dotted here and there with clusters of wooden hovels, and crossed by boggy tracks along which travellers

[1] Anon. p. 264, 267, Bæda's Life, c. vi. This was not on the site of the present abbey, but at the spot known as "Old Melrose." "On a green sheltered slope, a little below the point where the Tweed receives the scanty waters of the Leader, and then takes a bold semicircular sweep under the wood and rocks of Bemerside" (Raine, "Dictionary of Christian Biography," i. 725). Thence after a few years he went to Ripon with his abbot Eata, to whom King Alchfrid had given ground there for a monastery, but was expelled in 661 by Wilfrid, and returned to Melrose to face the pestilence. In 664, after the Synod of Whitby, he was sent as Prior to Lindisfarne, and after staying there twelve years (664—676) withdrew to the Isle of Farne. It was these later years at Melrose and Lindisfarne that formed the time of his main mission work.

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rode spear in hand and eye kept cautiously about them.[1] Though the new religion had already its adherents even in remote villages, the Northumbrian peasantry were for the most part Christians only in name. With the general religious indifference of their race they had yielded to their thegns in nominally accepting the new belief, as these had yielded to the king. But they retained their old superstitions side by side with the new worship; plague or mishap drove them back to a reliance on their heathen charms and amulets; and if trouble befel the Christian preachers who came settling among them they took it as proof of the wrath of the older gods. When some log-rafts which were floating down the Tyne for the construction of an abbey at its mouth drifted with the monks who were at work on them out to sea, the rustic bystanders shouted "Let nobody pray for them; let nobody pity these men, who have taken away from us our old worship; and how their new-fangled customs are to be kept nobody knows."[2] While Oswiu was nerving himslf for the struggle with Penda, Cuthbert wandered among listeners such as these, choosing above all the remoter mountain villages from whose roughness and poverty other teachers turned aside. Unlike his Irish comrades, the missionaries who had followed Aidan, he needed no interpreter as he passed from village to village; the frugal, long-headed Northumbrians listened willingly to one who was himself a peasant of the Lowlands and who had caught the rough North-

[1] Bæda, "Life of Cuthbert," c. vi.

[2] Bæda, "Life of Cuthbert," c. iii.

umbrian burr along the banks of the Tweed. His patience, his humorous good sense, the sweetness of his look, told for him, and not less the vigorous frame which fitted the peasant-preacher for the hard life he had chosen. "Never did man die of hunger who served God faithfully," he would say when nightfall found them supperless in the waste. "Look at the eagle overhead! God can feed us through him if He will"—and once at least he owed his meal to a fish that the scared bird let fall.[1] At another time a snowstorm drove his boat on the coast of Fife. "The snow closes the road along the shore," mourned his comrades! "the storm bars our way over sea." "There is still the way of heaven that lies open," said Cuthbert.

Severance of the Churches.

But poetic as was its temper, and unwearied as was the energy which it showed in the work of conversion, the success of the Irish Church threatened Britain with both political and religious ills. The Celtic Church, as we have seen in its own Irish home, was utterly devoid of that power of organization which was the strength of the Church of Rome. Hundreds of wandering bishops, a vast religious authority wielded by hereditary chieftains, an inextricable confusion of tribal quarrels and ecclesiastical controversies in which the clergy, robbed of all really spiritual influence, contributed no element save that of disorder to the state, a wild jungle-growth of asceticism which dissociated piety from morality, and the absence of those larger and more humanizing influences which a wider world alone can give, this is

[1] Bæda, "Life of Cuthbert," c. 12.

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the picture which the Irish Church of later times presents to us. Nor would the Irish Church in northern Britain have found very different fortunes. It had brought with it the purely monastic system of its home; and great as were its missionary labours, it showed no trace of any power of moulding the new Christianity into an ordered form. But even had it shown such a power, its permanent establishment would have been none the less disastrous. The religious unity of the English race would in fact have been broken even more fatally than its political unity was broken. To the church of the Roman obedience, to the church that is of Kent, East-Anglia, and Wessex, the Irish Church seemed as schismatic as the church of Wales. Both alike held aloof from any definite submission to the Church of Rome; both clung to a tonsure of their own; both kept Easter at a season different from that of the rest of the Christian world. The difference sprang simply from the long severance of the Celtic churches from the general body of Christendom; but when the conversion of Britain removed the barrier which isolated them, and again brought them face to face with the West, its real origin was lost in the fanatical hatred with which the Roman ecclesiastics denounced these usages, and the no less fanatical obstinacy with which the Irish ecclesiastics clung to them. To the one side the Irish tonsure was the tonsure of Simon Magus, the Irish Easter a Jewish Passover. To the other the tonsure was the tonsure of Columba, their Easter a tradition of St. John. So long as both rivals were threatened with the triumph of heathendom

under Penda, any strife between them seems to have been carefully avoided. But with the disappearance of this common danger a collision became inevitable; and the continuance of both as equal powers on English soil must have torn Englishmen asunder more fatally than any political parting.

Approach of the strife.

Even in the years that preceded his final struggle with Penda, Oswiu had been forced to watch anxiously the first signs of a gathering storm which was to end in open conflict between the churches. The storm was roused by the very step which he took to secure his rule in Deira, for if his marriage furthered the political union of the two northern realms, religiously it added a new element of discord to them. Eanfled brought with her the Roman traditions and the Roman allegiance of the Church of Kent.[1] An exile in the south from her childhood, she had known nothing of Aidan or his fellow-workers in the north; while to the men among whom she lived the Church from which Aidan came seemed simply schismatic. Through the heathen reaction after Eadwine's fall, and through the reign of Oswald, a deacon named James,[2] the sole relic of the church of Paulinus, had preserved the Roman usage in Deira: and he had instructed many in it "as the days brightened around him." James however might have lived on unheeded had not the coming of Eanfled given a new and powerful impulse to the movement. A Roman party at once formed about her. She brought with her a priest of the Roman Church in Kent, and observed

[1] Bæda, H. E. lib. iii. c. 25.
[2] Bæda, H. E. lib. ii. c. 20.

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the Roman Easter. While Oswiu with his people kept the Easter feast at the date fixed by his Irish missionaries, Eanfled—it was whispered—was still fasting for Lent.[1]

Benedict Biscop.

So long however as Aidan lived the reverence in which he was held hushed the faint whisper of coming strife. But with his death began the stirrings of two men who were destined to bring it quickly to a head. Born in the very year of Oswald's victory at the Hevenfeld, Wilfrid[2] had been sent in boyhood to study at Lindisfarne.[3] But in the very centre of Irish influence he felt the spell of Rome; and young as he was, he resolved to visit the Imperial City.[4] The thought sprang doubtless from the suggestion of Eanfled, to whom he was known, and who sent him in 652, the year after Oswiu's conquest of Deira, with letters of protection to her cousin, King Earconberht of Kent.[5] The same craving was stirring in the heart of Benedict Biscop, a thegn of Oswiu's court; and the two young men, for Benedict was but five and twenty and Wilfrid seventeen, met in Kent, and crossed the sea together on their Roman pilgrimage. Wilfrid however remained at Lyons on his way, and Benedict alone reached Rome; but the sight of the city kindled in

[1] Bæda, H. E. lib. iii. c. 25.

[2] For Wilfrid we have a biography by Eddi, in "Historians of the Church of York," ed. Raine, vol. i., and a more temperate statement in Bæda, H. E. lib. v. c. 19. Benedict Biscop's life is the first in Bæda's "Lives of the Abbots of Wearmouth and Yarrow" (printed at end of Hussey's edition of Eccl. Hist.).

[3] Eddi, c. 2.

[4] Eddi, c. 3.

[5] Bæda, H. E. lib. v. c. 19.

him a fervour which showed itself on his return a year later in ceaseless preaching against the Irish usages. Oswiu's son, Alchfrid, who had been raised to a share in his father's royalty, was stirred at last to vow the same pilgrimage,[1] and though he was unable to carry out his vow, his accession to the Roman party at once raised the quarrel of the churches into a grave political question. But harassing as was this growing strife, the attention of Oswiu was absorbed in a struggle for life till the fall of Penda; and after the victory of the Winwæd all thought of the little group of ecclesiastical rebels who clustered round Eanfled and Alchfrid was lost in the spiritual triumph of the church of Lindisfarne. Finan had followed Aidan as bishop at Holy Island;[2] and the years of his bishopric were years of a wonderful activity. If Wessex was won by a Roman missionary, the winning of Central Britain, the reconquest of Essex, the first evangelization even of the wild South-Saxons, were the work of missionaries from the Celtic church of the north.

Wilfrid.

But Alchfrid and Eanfled remained steadily at the head of their Roman party; and the efforts of Benedict Biscop were soon reinforced by the arrival of a worker yet more dogged and energetic. This was Wilfrid, whom he had left behind in Gaul, and who now returned after two visits to Rome to combat what he denounced as the schism of Northumbria.[3] Young as he was, and he was still only a few

[1] Bæda, Vit. Abbatum, p. 317.
[2] Bæda, H. E. lib. iii. c. 17.
[3] Eddi, c. 7.

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years over twenty, Wilfrid's energy proved him a valuable ally, and Alchfrith set him as abbot in 661 over a house which he had founded some years before at Ripon. The house had been an offshoot from Melrose, and Cuthbert was among the brethren who had come from Tweed-side to dwell there; but to the young abbot these brethren were schismatics, and he drove them out.[1] Their expulsion brought the quarrel to a head; for the strife was hotly taken up by Finan's successor, Bishop Colman of Lindisfarne; while Alchfrid summoned to Wilfrid's aid Bishop Agilberct, a Frank missionary who had been called after the death of Birinus to the see of the West-Saxons. There is no ground, however, for believing that the efforts of the Roman party would have been more successful than of old had Oswiu continued to support the church of Lindisfarne. Hitherto his support had been vigorous and unwavering. Whatever might be the hostility of his wife and son, the king remained true to the church which had given shelter to the sons of Æthelfrith in the days of their exile. He had learned to speak Irish during his stay at Hii,[2] and his sympathy went with the Irish clergy around him; he loved Bishop Colman as his brother Oswald had loved Bishop Aidan.[3] The house indeed which he had just founded at Streonashalh as a thankoffering for his victory at the Winwæd was framed on the model of the house at Holy Island.

[1] Bæda, H. E. lib. v. c. 19.

[2] "Oswiu . . . illorum etiam linguâ optime imbutus."—Bæda, H. E. lib. iii. c. 25.

[3] Bæda, H. E. lib. iii. c. 26.

But a marked change of temper was seen when he summoned a synod at Whitby in 664 for the settlement of the disputed questions.[1] The forces as they faced one another still seemed strangely unequal. The Roman party consisted, as of old, of none but Alchfrid, Bishop Agilberct with his chaplain Agatho, the priest James, and Abbot Wilfrid, for Benedict was on his way to Rome. On the other side were the representatives of almost the whole church of Northumbria, Bishop Colman, the East-Saxon Bishop Cedd who acted as interpreter, the brethren of Lindisfarne, Abbess Hild and the brethren and sisters of the very house in which the synod was gathered. Above all, the Irish party looked for aid to Oswiu himself, who presided over the mixed assembly of clergy and thegns. His first words however showed the drift of the king's policy. The disputed questions he submitted to the judgment of the council. But he pressed earnestly for uniformity; and his resolve to obtain it was seen in his significant interference at the close of the debate. Colman pleaded hotly for the Irish fashion of the tonsure and for the Irish time of keeping Easter. Wilfrid's plea for the Roman, learned and elaborate as was its form, condensed itself in the single argument which he saw had weight with the king. "You fight," he said, "against the whole world."[2] Still the debate went on. The one disputant appealed to the authority of Columba, the other to that of St. Peter. "You

Synod at Whitby.

[1] Bæda, H. E. lib. iii. c. 25.

[2] "Contra totum orbem . . . . pugnant."—Bæda, H. E. lib. iii. c. 25.

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own," cried the king at last to Colman, "that Christ gave to Peter the keys of the kingdom of Heaven—has he given such power to Columba?" The bishop could but answer "No." "Then will I rather obey the porter of Heaven," said Oswiu, "lest when I reach its gates he who has the keys in his keeping turn his back on me, and there be none to open." The humorous form of Oswiu's decision could not hide its importance; and the synod had no sooner broken up than Colman, followed by the whole of the Irish-born brethren and thirty of their English fellows, forsook the see of Aidan and sailed away from Hii.

Its issues.

It is possible that lesser political motives may have partly swayed Oswiu in his decision; for the revival of Mercia had left him but the alliance of Kent in the south; and this victory of the Kentish Church would draw tighter the bonds which linked together the two powers. But we may fairly credit him with a larger statesmanship. Trivial in fact as were the actual points of difference which parted the Roman Church from the Irish, the question to which communion Northumbria should belong was, as we have seen, of immense moment to the after fortunes of England. It was not merely that, as Wilfrid said, to fight against Rome was to fight against the world. Had England indeed clung to the Irish Church, it must have remained spiritually isolated from the bulk of Western Christendom. Fallen as Rome might be from its older greatness, it preserved the traditions of civilization, of letters and art, and law. Its faith still served as a bond which held together the nations that sprang from the wreck of the Empire. To repulse

Rome was to condemn England to isolation. But grave as such considerations were, they were of little weight beside the influence which Oswiu's decision had on the very unity of the English race. The issue of the synod not only gave England a share in the religious unity of Western Christendom, it gave her a religious unity at home. However dimly such thoughts may have presented themselves to Oswiu's mind, it was the instinct of a statesman that led him to set aside the love and gratitude of his youth, and to secure the religious oneness of England in the Synod of Whitby.

The Primacy.

From the Channel to the Firth of Forth the English Church was now a single religious body within the obedience of Rome, and the time had come for carrying out those plans of organization which Rome had conceived from the first moment of Augustine's landing. The actual scheme of ecclesiastical government indeed which Gregory had then devised had broken down before the stress of facts. Of his two contemplated archbishoprics, York made as yet no claim to a primacy, while London gave way to the claims of Canterbury as the see of Augustine, as the mother-church of Britain, above all as the bishopric of the one realm which had from the first remained Christian, the kingdom of Kent. Canterbury had become the natural centre of ecclesiastical life, now that the life called for such a centre for its development. The choice of its Primate thus became all important, and when the death of Archbishop Deusdedit in the plague of 664 left the see of Canterbury vacant, Oswiu as still exercising some

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nominal supremacy over Britain, and Ecgberht of Kent as king of the actual diocese, joined in selecting a priest named Wighard for the post and in sending him for consecration to Rome. The selection of Wighard, following on that of Deusdedit, was in itself a notable step towards the nationalization of the church, for Wighard, like his predecessor in the primacy, was an Englishman. Though seventy years had passed since Augustine's arrival, neither he nor the Roman missionaries who followed him, Laurentius, Mellitus, Justus, or Honorius, had acquired the English tongue; and throughout their primacy the Kentish kings had been forced, like Æthelberht, to gather what they could of their teaching through the means of interpreters. It marked the rise of a keener sense of nationality when Ecgberht, with Oswiu's assent, resolved to have "a bishop of his own race and his own tongue."[1]

Theodore.

Wighard however died of plague on his arrival at Rome, and Pope Vitalian, interpreting the request of the kings for the consecration of the primate they had selected as a request to find them a primate[2] in any case, selected in Wighard's place a Neapolitan abbot of African race named Hadrian. Hadrian,

[1] "Cupiens eum sibi Romæ ordinari episcopum, quatenus suæ gentis et linguæ habens antistitem, tanto perfectius, cum subjectis sibi populis, vel verbis imbueretur fidei vel mysteriis, quanto hæc non per interpretem, sed per cognati et contribulis viri linguam simul manumque susciperet."—Bæda, Vit. Abbatum. Hussey's Bæda, p. 317: The "contribulis" is emphatic too, for Deusdedit had been a West-Saxon.

[2] See Vitalian's letter. Stubbs and Haddan, "Councils," iii. 111, 112, with the editor's note.

however, refused the offer of so distant a see,[1] and it was with some difficulty that the Pope at last found an archbishop in Theodore, an eastern monk born at Tarsus in Cilicia, a man famous for his learning and piety, but who had already reached the age of sixty-six. Aged however as he was, Theodore was kept four months in Rome till his eastern tonsure could be superseded by a tonsure in the correct Roman fashion, and the characteristic caution of the Roman court was seen in its despatch of Hadrian as his companion lest any shade of Greek heterodoxy should be introduced by the new primate into Britain.[2] The result of these delays, and of a long detention in Gaul during his journey, was that Theodore did not land in Kent till the May of 669.

Mercia under Wulfhere.

The Britain which he found on his arrival had become in the interval a very different country from the Britain which we last surveyed after the battle of the Winwæd. Northumbria, which then seemed supreme over the whole English race, had now retired within her own bounds across the Humber, and retained none of her conquests to the south of that river save the territory of the Lindiswaras. Mercia on the other hand, which then seemed utterly destroyed, had risen into a greatness it had never known before. If it left for a time Lindsey to Northumbria, it reft from that kingdom

[1] "Antistitem," says Vitalian to Oswiu, "minime valuimus nunc reperire pro longinquitate itineris."

[2] "Ut ei doctrinæ cooperator existens, diligenter adtenderet ne quid ille contrarium veritati fidei, Græcorum more, in ecclesiam cui præesset, introduceret."—Bæda, H. E. lib. iv. c. 1.

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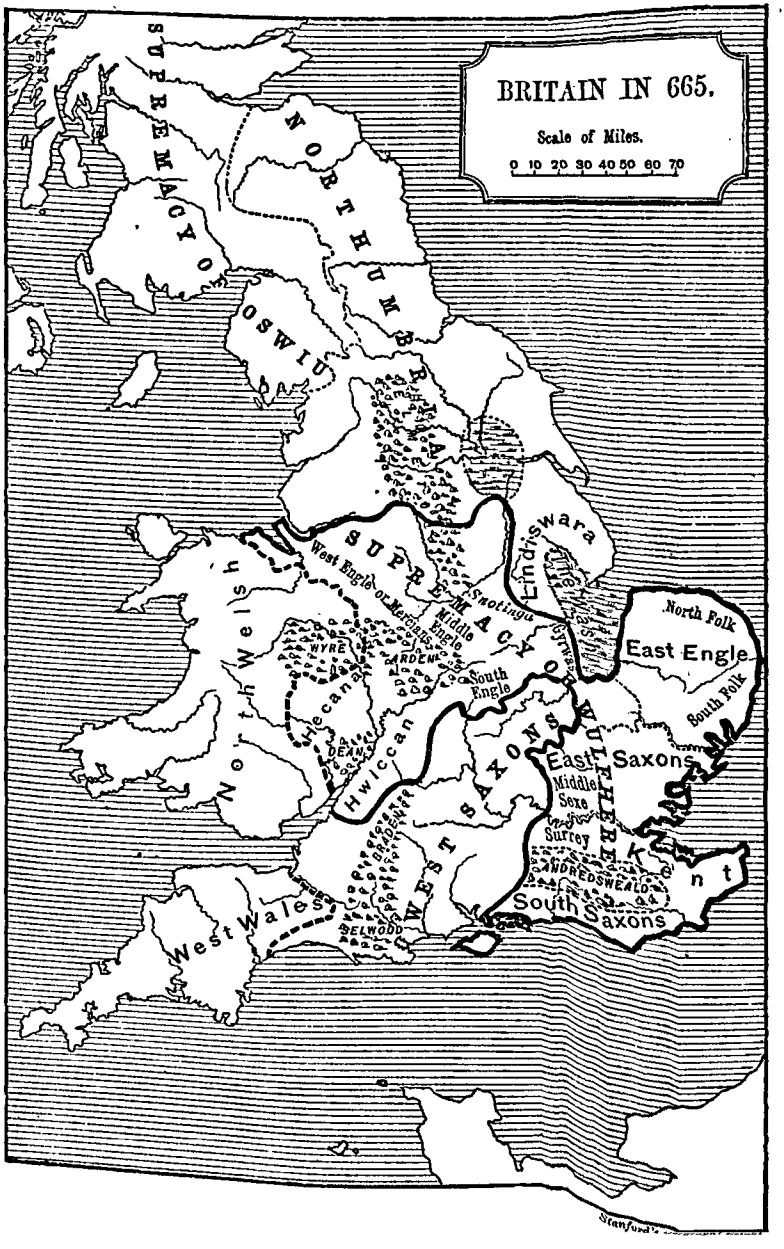
the district south of the Mersey, and with it at least the site and port of Chester.[1] In Mid-Britain East-Anglia may still have held aloof from Wulfhere, but in all other quarters the realm of Penda seems to have been quickly restored. Even the territory of the Hwiccas, which had been the spoil of the victory at Cirencester, again found itself in the Mercian grasp; for Wulfhere's rule was not only owned in the Severn valley, but embraced the lower valley of the Wye. In this region, our Herefordshire, Wulfhere set his brother Merewald as an under-king.[2] But he did more than restore his father's realm. The renewed activity of the West-Saxons, which had shown itself in their recent victories over the Britons on their south-western frontier, may have led to some fresh attempts to recover the lost territory of the Hwiccas, but whatever was the cause of the conflict between Cenwealh's host and that of Wulfhere in 661, it ended in so decisive a victory for the Mercians that their ravages extended into the heart of Wessex as far as Ashdown.[3] It was probably this triumph which enabled Wulfhere to carry his arms into the valley of the Thames. To the eastward the East-Saxons and London came to own his supremacy;[4]

[1] We have no record of this conquest or of its date; but from this time we find Cheshire and the country as far as the Mersey in Mercian hands.

[2] "Germanus vero ipsius, Westan-Hecanorum rex, sanctus Merewaldus."—Flor. Worc. Geneal. i. 265. The Hwiccas were in the same way ruled by Subreguli; in the next Mercian reign Oshere is "Hwicciorum subregulus."—Flor. Worc. Geneal. i. 239.

[3] Engl. Chron. a. 661.

[4] Wini bought the Bishopric of London from Wulfhere. (Bæda, H. E. lib. iii. c. 7.) For Essex, Bæda, H. E. lib. iii. c. 30.


BRITAIN IN 665.
Scale of Miles.
0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70
SUPREMACY OF OSWIU
NORTHUMBRIA
DEIRA
BERNICIA
SUPREMACY
West Engle or Mercians
Middle Engle
South Engle
Snotingas
Lindiswara
North Folk
East Engle
South Folk
North Welsh
WYRE
ARDEN
Hwiccan
DEAN
Hwiccan
East Saxons
Middle Sexe
Surrey
WULFHERE'S
Kent
WEST SAXONS
SELWOOD
ANDREDSWEALD
South Saxons
West Wales
Stanford

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while southwards he pushed across the river and over Surrey, which we find governed by an under-king of his appointment,[1] into Sussex. The wild Saxon tribe which was sheltered by the Weald may have sought his overlordship as a protection from the more pressing attacks of the West-Saxons; in 661, at any rate, their king Æthelwalch was baptized in Wulfhere's presence and by his persuasion;[2] and his submission was rewarded by a gift of two outlying settlements of the Jutes, the Isle of Wight and the lands of the Meon-wara along the Southampton Water, which we must suppose had been previously torn from Wessex by the arms of the Mercian king.

Theodore in Britain.

The Mercian supremacy, which thus reached from the Humber to the Channel, and stretched as far westward as the Wye, while on the eastern coast East-Anglia and Kent, though still independent, lay helpless and isolated in its grasp, was thus the main political fact in Britain when Theodore landed on its shores. He came with a clear and distinct aim—the organization of the English dioceses, the grouping of these subordinate centres round the see of Canterbury, and the bringing the church which was thus organized into a fixed relation to Western Christendom through its obedience to the see of Rome. With this purpose he spent the three years which followed his arrival, from 669 to 672, in

[1] Malmesbury, Gest. Pontif. ed. Migne, col. 1515. For the Chertsey charters, see article on Erkenwald, by Stubbs, in "Dictionary of Christian Biography," vol. ii.

[2] Bæda, H. E. lib. iv. c. 13.

journeying through the whole island.[1] Wherever he went he secured obedience to Rome by enforcing the Roman observance of Easter and the other Roman rites, while his very presence brought about for himself a recognition of his primacy over the nation at large. As yet no archbishop had crossed the bounds of Kent, and to the rest of Britain the primate at Canterbury must have seemed a mere provincial prelate like the rest. But the presence of Theodore in Northumbria, in Mercia, in Wessex alike, the welcome he everywhere received, the reverence with which he was everywhere listened to, at once raised his position into a national one.[2] "He," says Bæda, "was the first of the archbishops whom the whole English Church consented to obey;"[3] and everywhere he went he asserted this new position of the primacy by an ordering, though, as we shall see, only a preliminary ordering, of the English dioceses.

First ordering of dioceses.

Some ordering was absolutely needful. So great a confusion had been produced by the contest between the churches, that to hot partisans on either side some of the English bishops seemed no bishops at all; and Wilfrid, when named to the see of York, had cast an open slur on the validity of his fellow-prelates' orders by crossing over the Channel to seek consecration from the bishops of Gaul.[4] Nor was this

[1] Bæda, H. E. lib. iv. c. 2: "Peragratâ insulâ totâ, quaquaversum Anglorum gentes morabantur."

[2] "Nam et libentissime ab omnibus suscipiebatur atque audiebatur."—Bæda, H. E. lib. iv. c. 2.

[3] "Isque primus erat in Archiepiscopis, cui omnis Anglorum Ecclesia manus dare consentiret."—Bæda, H. E. lib. iv. c. 2.

[4] Bæda, H. E. lib. iii. c. 28.

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the worst. Two of the English dioceses, those of Wessex and Northumbria, had for some years seen the presence of no bishop at all. In Wessex king Cenwealh had quarrelled with bishop Agilberct, driven him as a foreigner from the realm, and set Wini as bishop in his stead. Then in 666 he had in turn driven Wini from his see and left Wessex without any bishop at all.[1] On the other hand Wilfrid, who had gone to Gaul for his consecration, had delayed his return so long, that Oswiu set Ceadda as bishop in his place; and after three years' retirement at Ripon he had withdrawn to the south, and was actually administering the vacant diocese of Kent when Theodore arrived there.[2] Wilfrid, however, was now placed in his northern diocese, and Leutherius, a nephew of Agilberct was drawn from Gaul to fill the bishopric of the West-Saxons,[3] while Theodore solved the vexed question of their disputed orders by re-consecrating Bisi as bishop over East-Anglia, and Ceadda as bishop of Mercia.[4] Wini remained at London in his diocese of the East-Saxons, which he had bought from Wulfhere in 666,[5] and the placing of his own under-bishop, Putta, at Rochester completed Theodore's first ordering of the English episcopate.

In the autumn of 673 this earlier work was

[1] Bæda, H. E. lib. iii. c. 7.

[2] Eddi, "Life of Wilfrid," c. 14; Bæda, H. E. iv. 2.

[3] Bæda, H. E. lib. iii. c. 7.

[4] Bæda, H. E. lib. iv. c. 2, 3. "Denuo catholica ratione consummavit."—Flor. Worc. a. 673.

[5] Bæda, H. E. lib. iii. c. 7.

completed by the calling together of these bishops with their leading clergy in a council at Hertford.[1] The decrees of this council formed a further step in Theodore's work of settlement, for by them each bishop with his clergy was restricted within the limits of his own diocese, and the free wandering of the earlier English mission-bishops over the face of the country was brought to an end.[2] A yet more important canon enacted that this synod at Hertford should be but the first of a series of such synods, and that the bishops should meet each year at the close of July in a spot which bore the name of Cloveshoe.[3] It is as the first of these assemblies that the council of Hertford is so important in our history. The synods to which its canons gave birth not only exerted an important influence on the church itself, but they exerted a yet more powerful influence upon the nation at large. At every important juncture the new bishops gathered round their primate from every quarter of England, to take counsel and frame canons for the rule of the church at large. They met, not as Northumbrian or Mercian or Saxon bishops, but as bishops of a national church. These meetings were in fact the first of our national gatherings for general legislation; for it was at a much later time that the Wise Men of Wessex, or Northumbria, or Mercia, learned to come together in

Council of Hertford.

[1] Wini, however, was not present at this council.

[2] For council of Hertford, see Haddan and Stubbs, "Councils," vol. iii. pp. 118—122.

[3] For the various localities to which this name has been assigned, see Haddan and Stubbs, "Councils," vol. iii. p. 122, note.

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the Witenagemote of all England. The synods which Theodore convened as religiously representative of the whole English nation led the way by their example to our national parliament, while the canons which these councils enacted, though carefully avoiding all direct intermeddling with secular matters, pointed the way to a national system of law. How strong an influence this work would exert on English feeling, the next hundred years were to show. It was in vain that during that period state after state strove to build up the fabric of a national unity by the power of the sword. But in spite of their failure the drift towards unity grew more and more irresistible. If England could not find its national life in the supremacy of Northumbria or Mercia, it found it in the church; and amidst the wreck of kingdoms the power of the church grew steadily greater, because the church alone expressed the national consciousness of the English people.[1]

The school at Canterbury.

In the journeys of these three years throughout Britain Theodore had found a companion and fellow-worker in his friend Hadrian. But he found in him a fellow-worker in more than this task of organization. Both of the friends were famous for their knowledge as well as their piety,[2] and one of their earliest efforts seems to have been to gather a school at Canterbury. As yet the knowledge which came in the train of the

[1] For the work of Theodore, and the character of the new English Church, see Stubbs, Const. Hist. vol. i. chap. viii.

[2] The Pope in a synodical letter calls Theodore, "archiepiscopum et philosophum."—Stubbs and Haddan, "Councils," iii. p. 140. "Literis sacris simul et sæcularibus abundanter ambo erant instructi."—Bæda, H. E. lib. iv. c. 2.

new faith had filtered into Britain through the wandering Irishmen, half-scholars, half-missionaries, who settled in lonely spots, and then eked out their living by the learners they drew about them.[1] Such teaching, however, was necessarily wanting in permanence; and a new and settled form was given to English education by the establishment of such a school as that of Canterbury. Though its main teaching was in subjects that related to the knowledge either of the Bible or of the services of the church, yet this scheme of education proved broad enough to embrace the astronomy, the arithmetic, and the poetic art of the time, as well as a knowledge of the Greek and Latin tongues. In its Greek teaching, indeed, the school was fortunate, for the knowledge of Greek was fast fading away from the western world, and where it still lingered, instruction in it had died down into the mastering of a list of words without knowledge of its grammar or its literature. But Greek was the native tongue of Theodore, and though Hadrian was by birth an African, he had lived long enough in Southern Italy, where Greek was still a living tongue, to be as skilled a master of it as of Latin.[2] How thorough their teaching in both languages was, is shown by the fact that sixty years afterwards Bæda found men who had been trained in the school of Canterbury, who knew

[1] Thus Maidulf, "deficientibus necessariis scholares in discipulatum accepit, ut eorum liberalitate tenuitatem victus corrigeret." —Malm. Vit. Aldhelmi ("Anglia Sacra," vol. ii. p. 3).

[2] "Græcæ pariter et Latinæ linguæ peritissimus."—Bæda, H. E. lib. iv. c. 1.

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Latin and Greek as perfectly as their own English tongue.[1]

But the influence of this school on the development of English intellect is shown more vividly by the fact that from it our written literature, the literature that is of the English in Britain, took its birth. With one scholar, Æddi, who followed Wilfrid to York, began the prose literature of Northern Britain; with another, Ealdhelm, began at an even earlier date the whole literature of the South. Ealdhelm[2] was a kinsman of the royal house of Wessex, and probably a son of one of the West-Saxon kings. If, as seems likely, he was born in the middle of the seventh century, he must have already reached manhood when the school was set up at Canterbury; and his earlier training was due to Maidulf, an Irish wanderer who had sought a spot for his hermitage in the woodlands of northern Wessex, and who was gathering scholars there from among its thegns. But it was from Hadrian and Theodore that Ealdhelm drew the intellectual impulse which he communicated to the scholars who gathered round him when he returned to his home at Malmesbury. He had become a master of all the knowledge of his day, and the rising scholar-world of Kent and Northumbria welcomed his Latin poems and prose, where a real quickness of wit and perception of

1 "Indicio est quod usque hodie supersunt de eorum discipulis, qui Latinam Græcamque linguam æque ut propriam in qua nati sunt, norunt."—Bæda, H. E. lib. iv. c. 2.

2 Ealdhelm's Life by Faricius is printed by Giles, "Opera Aldhelmi," p. 354; that by W. of Malmesbury forms the fifth book of his "Gesta Pontificum," in Wharton, "Anglia Sacra," vol. ii.

natural beauty struggled with a fatal luxuriance of metaphor and rhetoric.[1] But to Wessex itself Ealdhelm was more than a mere scholar. He was the first singer of his race. Ælfred loved to tell how Ealdhelm won men to heed sacred things by taking stand as a gleeman and singing English songs on a bridge.[2] The songs of Ealdhelm led the way in that upgrowth of popular poetry which was soon to fill the land with English verse. Creed, prayer, riddle, allegory, acrostic, bible-story and saint-story, hero-tale and battle-tale, proverb and moral saw, the longing of the exile, the toil of the seaman, the warning of the grave, passed alike into rime. It was with an ever-growing stock of ballads that the gleeman trolled his way from fair to fair. A book of English songs was the prize of Ælfred's childhood; English songs were the first study of his children; "vain songs and legends of heathendom" were played by Dunstan in youth upon his harp. A mass of poetic romance grew up round the later English kings; and the story of Æthelstan and Eadgar has been all but lost in the ballad-growth which the chroniclers of the twelfth century melted down into prose.

[1] Malmesbury, "Life of Aldhelm" (Angl. Sacr. vol. ii. p. 7) says:—"Græci involute, Romani splendide, Angli pompatice dictare solent," and credits Ealdhelm with combining the merits of the three. "Involute" and "pompatice" fairly describe a writer who is utterly carried away by the new charms of style.

[2] Malmesbury, "Life of Aldhelm" (Angl. Sacr. vol. ii. p. 4), "Nativæ, quoque linguæ non negligebat carmina." He quotes the gleeman story from Ælfred's Handbook, "manualem librum regis Ælfredi." "Commemmorat Ælfredus carmen triviale, quod adhuc vulgo cantitatur, Aldhelmum fecisse;" so that Aldhelm's songs were still popular in the twelfth century.

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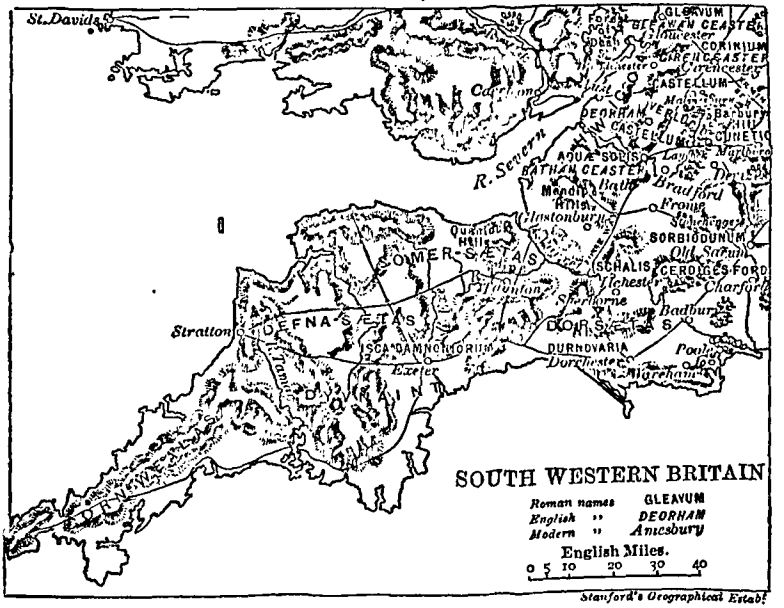
659-690.

Conquest of the Avon basin.

The district in which Ealdhelm taught and sung was one which had but lately passed into the hands of the West-Saxons. We have seen that in their early conquests of the Marlborough Downs they had been barred from further progress by a forest that then filled the upper basin of the Avon. This woodland was in itself a northern continuation of the great



Selwood; it extended even in the time of Charles I. as far as Cricklade; at the time of our story it still covered the site of Malmesbury;[1] and the town of Devizes, on the brow of the hill looking down over the Avon basin, probably preserves in Latin form the

[1] "Nemoris amœnitate quod tunc temporis immensum eo loco succreverat captus, eremeticam exercuit" (Maidulfus). Malmesbury, "Life of Aldhelm" (Angl. Sacr. vol. ii. p. 3).

rendering of some English name like "Mere" or the "Borderspot," from which this forest ran unbroken westward as far as the outskirts of Bath.[1] Though the victory of Deorham at last carried West-Saxon territory round the northern and western borders of this British tract, and left it running up like a wedge into English soil, it was still saved for a while from annexation by the fall of Ceawlin, the outbreak of anarchy among his people, and the fatal blows which fell upon the West-Saxons at the hands of Eadwine and Penda. But the loss of the territory of the Hwiccas, the loss of the Severn valley and the Cotswolds, forced them to fresh action in this quarter. Barred from any further advance to the north, they saw even their progress westward threatened by the presence of Mercia on the lower Avon; and it was as much to preserve their one remaining field of conquest as to compensate for the retreat of their frontier in other quarters that Cenwealh marched on this northernmost fastness of Dyvnaint.

Ealdhelm's work.

In 652 a battle at Bradford on the Avon made the forest tract his own;[2] while a fresh fight with the Welsh, six years later, in 658, at a place called the Pens, cleared them from the ground along the upper Parrett.[3] It must have been soon after this conquest that Maidulf, an Irish scholar monk,[4] set up his

[1] Guest, "Boundaries of the Welsh and English Races after the conquest of Bath," Arch. Journ. vol. xvi. 112-116.

[2] Engl. Chron. a. 652. [3] Engl. Chron. a. 658.

[4] "Eruditione philosophus, professione monachus."—Malm. "Life of Aldhelm" (Angl. Sacr. vol. ii. p. 3).

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hermitage in the forest-tract which had been torn from the Britons, and drew around him the first scholars of Wessex. Ealdhelm, as we have seen, was the most famous outcome of this school, but he no sooner succeeded Maidulf as abbot of the little township which was growing up round that teacher's school and church, and which still preserves his memory in its name of "Maidulf's burh" or Malmesbury, than he became a centre, not only of intellectual, but of religious and industrial activity in his neighbourhood. In the heart of the great woodland which stretched from Malmesbury to the Channel, he planted four new germs of social life in the monasteries which he established at Bradford on the Avon; at Frome on the little river which bears that name; at Sherborne on the borders of the forest country through which the Dorsætas must have been still at this time pushing their way; and at Wareham on the coast beside Poole—a point which shows that these invaders had already advanced at least thus far towards the west. The churches he raised at these spots are noteworthy as the first instances of building which we meet with in Wessex, but they had nothing of the rudeness of early work; architecturally, indeed, they were superior to the famous churches which Benedict Biscop was raising at this time by the banks of the Wear.[1] So masterly was their construction that Ealdhelm's churches at Malmesbury and Sherborne were the only churches of this early time that were spared by the Norman

[1] Freeman, "King Ine," Somersetshire Archæological Proceedings, 1874, vol. xx. p. 31.

architects after the conquest; while the church which he erected on the scene of Cenwealh's victory at Bradford on Avon, stands in almost perfect preservation to-day.

The English dioceses

While Ealdhelm was thus riming and building in Wessex, Theodore himself was steadily carrying out the second part of his plans for the organization of the Church. In the council of Hertford the question of the increase of the episcopate had been debated, but left without formal decision.[1] From what we find afterwards it is probable that this absence of any resolve on the part of the council was owing to the reluctance of most of the bishops concerned to consent to the division of their dioceses. But Theodore's purpose remained unshaken, and the council had no sooner closed than he began to carry out his plans. The shape which his present work took, like the shape of his earlier work, was determined by the previous history of the English people. The conquest of the Continent had been wrought either by races such as the Goths, who were already Christian, or by heathens such as the Franks, who bowed to the Christian faith of the nations they conquered. To this oneness of religion between the German invaders of the Empire and their Roman subjects was owing the preservation of all that survived of the Roman world. The Church everywhere remained untouched. The Christian bishop became the defender of the conquered Italian or Gaul

[1] The ninth canon runs—"In commune tractatum est, ut plures Episcopi crescente numero fidelium augerentur, sed de hac re ad præsens siluimus."—Stubbs and Haddan, "Councils," vol. i. p. 120.

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against the Gothic and Lombard conqueror, the mediator between the German and his subjects, the one bulwark against barbaric violence and oppression. To the barbarian on the other hand he was the representative of all that was venerable in the past, the living record of law, of letters, and of art. But in Britain priesthood and people were exterminated together. When Theodore came to organize the Church of England, the very memory of the older Christian Church which existed in Roman Britain had passed away. The first missionaries to the Englishmen, strangers in a heathen land, attached themselves necessarily to the courts of the kings, who were their earliest converts, and whose conversion was generally followed by that of their people. The English bishops were thus at first royal chaplains, and their diocese was naturally nothing but the kingdom. The kingdom of Kent became the diocese of Canterbury, and the kingdom of Northumbria became the diocese of York. So absolutely was this the case that the diocese grew or shrank with the growth or shrinking of the realm which it spiritually represented, and a bishop of Wessex or of Mercia found the limits of his see widened or cut short by the triumphs of Wulfhere or of Ine. In this way too realms which are all but forgotten are commemorated in the limits of existing sees. That of Rochester represented till of late an obscure kingdom of West Kent, and the frontier of the original kingdom of Mercia might be recovered by following the map of the ancient bishopric of Lichfield.

To make episcopal rule and supervision a real and

living thing over such wide spaces, it was needful that these realm-dioceses should be broken up into smaller sees; but it was characteristic of the care with which Theodore sought an historical foundation for his work that even in their division he only fell back on the tribal demarcations which lay within the limits of each kingdom. Thus when in 673 he broke up the see of East-Anglia, it was by dividing it into dioceses of the North-folk and the South-folk, whose prelates were established at Dunwich and Elmham.[1] He dealt in the same way with the huger Mercian diocese by setting a bishop over the Middle English with a see at Leicester; by establishing at Worcester a bishopric for the Hwiccas of the lower Severn valley; and another for the far-off Hecanas at Hereford; while the peoples whom Wulfhere's sword had torn from the kingdom of the West-Saxons, and part of whom at least seem to have been known as the South-Engle, may have been committed to the charge of a bishop at Dorchester on the Thames.[2] The see of Lichfield thus returned to its original form of a see of the Mercians proper, though its bounds on the

Division of the Mercian diocese.

[1] Bæda, H. E. lib. iv. c. 5; Flor. Worc. a. 673.

[2] The details of this division are obscure (see Haddan and Stubbs, "Councils," iii. 127-130). For Worcester we have Bæda's authority (H. E. iv. 23), as well as for Dorchester (ibid.), though this is disputed by Professor Stubbs ("Councils," iii. 130, note e). The sees of Mercia and the Middle Angles were still both in Sexulf's hands as late as 678, so that the separation of the latter must be later than that year (Bæda, H. E. iv. 12). On Putta's flight from Rochester, in 676, Sexulf gave him possession of a church at Hereford, and there he died (Bæda, H. E. iv. 12); but at what exact year the actual bishopric was established we are not told.

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westward now embraced much of the upper Severn valley with Cheshire and the lands northward to the Mersey.

The Monastic movement.

The division of Mercia seems to have been begun in the face of an opposition from Bishop Winfrid, who held this vast diocese, which was only put an end to by Theodore's removal of him from his see in 675;[1] and years more had to be spent in completing the whole arrangement; but throughout Theodore could count on the strenuous support of the king. It was possibly indeed the accession of Æthelred, who succeeded his brother Wulfhere in 675, that enabled Theodore to begin his work in Mercia in that year.[2] Æthelred was a king of a temper far other than that of his predecessor. Though the first days of his reign were disturbed by a strife with Kent, which was sinking more and more into dependence on the Mercian kings, and which seems to have endeavoured to resume its independence on Wulfhere's death, an effort that ended in fresh submission after the destruction of Rochester,[3] his temper was peaceful and religious; and his activity mainly showed itself in a planting and endowment of monastic colonies which gradually transformed the face of the realm. In the monastic movement of this time two strangely contrasted impulses worked together to change the very aspect of the new England and the new English society. The one was the passion for solitude, the first outcome of the

[1] Bæda, H. E. lib. iv. c. 6.
[2] Eng. Chron. a. 675.
[3] Bæda, H. E. lib. iv. c. 12.

religious impulse given by the conversion; a passion for communing apart with themselves and with God which drove men into waste and woodland and desolate fen. The other was the equally new passion for social life on the part of the nation at large, the outcome of its settlement and well-doing on the conquered soil, and yet more of the influence of the new religion, coming as it did from the social civilization of the older world, and insensibly drawing men together by the very form of its worship and its belief. The first impulse showed itself most vividly in the Irish missionaries, in Aidan's choice of a lonely island for his settlement at Lindisfarne; in Cuthbert's choice of a yet lonelier sandbank for his later hermitage; in Ceadda's retirement in the quiet solitude of Lichfield; or in Maidulf's withdrawal to the woods of Malmesbury. But the close of the seventh century had no sooner brought with it its period of peace than the social impulse was quick to undo the work which these solitaries had done. Reverence for their holiness, with a desire to profit by their teaching, drew devotee and scholar alike around them, and the little community had no sooner vindicated the new dignity which Christianity had given to labour by winning field from the forest or meadow from the marsh than it became the centre of a yet wider attraction. The sanctity of such settlements served in these early days of the new religion to ensure for them peace and safety in the midst of whatever war or social trouble might be disturbing the country about them; and the longing for a life of quiet industry which we see telling from this moment

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upon the older English longing for war[1] drew men in crowds to these so-called monasteries.[2]

Its results.

No settlements indeed could be more unlike the monasteries of later days. A vow of obedience and a vow of celibacy sufficed to hold the monks themselves, who formed the nucleus of each, together; and the necessity of labour for their maintenance left their intercourse with the settlers and dependents about them as free as that of other men. So far indeed were these homes from being bound by the strict ties of the Benedictine rule that they were often gathered on the loose Irish model of the family or the clan round some noble and wealthy person who sought devotional retirement. The looseness of their discipline, combined with a peculiar usage which in some cases brought monks and nuns together under the rule of the same abbess, exposed these communities at a later time to grave scandals; and in many cases the establishment of such a monastery was only a pretext under which a lord and his dependents exempted themselves from their national obligations of military service.[3] But even in such a case, the new aversion from warfare, the new longing for peaceful industry, was shown in the so-called monastery. Whatever were the causes, however, of this movement, it brought with it a transfer and readjustment of population which changed the whole

[1] Bæda, H. E. iv. 3. Vit. Abbăt. (Hussey's "Bæda," p. 322).

[2] Thus there were six hundred at Wearmouth soon after its establishment. Bæda, Vit. Abbatum (Hussey's "Bæda," p. 328).

[3] Bæda, Letter to Ecgberht (Hussey's "Bæda," p. 338), and H. E. lib. v. c. 23.

face of the country. Here and there it revived the civilization of the past by bringing fresh life to the ruins of a Roman town. The solitude of its ruins drew to them a hermit, and the sanctity of the hermit drew after him a crowd of disciples and settlers that again brought busy life to its desolation. But it made a more startling revolution by reclaiming the wilder districts which civilization and social life had as yet never visited at all. It broke the dreary line of the northern coast with settlements which proved forerunners of some of our busiest ports. It broke the silence of waste and moor by houses like those of Ripon and Lastingham. It set agricultural colonies in the depths of vast woodlands, as at Evesham or Malmesbury, while by a chain of religious houses it made its way step by step into the heart of the fens.

Forest of Arden.

We can best realize the change which this movement made in Mercia by following it here and there across the face of the country. In the angle between the Cotswolds and the hills which form the eastern boundary of the Severn valley lay the largest of all the forests of Britain. The barren tract of low clays indeed which lay along the base of the Cotswolds was for the most part free from wood, but across the Avon, from the site of our Rugby to that of our Evesham, ran a line of dense woodland which stretched away northward without a break to the bounds of Cannock Chase,[1] and extended

[1] A line of hamlets which bear the name of "Woodend," stretching across Staffordshire, just south of Walsall and Wolverhampton, marks roughly the northern border of Arden. Camden marks one by Shenstone, just south of Lichfield,

eastward and westward from the valley of the Severn to the limits of our Leicestershire.[1] This was Arden the forest into whose depths Shakspere could stray centuries later from his childhood's home at Stratford, and in whose glades his fancy placed the scene of one of his loveliest dramas.[2] But in Shakspere's day its mass was broken everywhere by the clearings of the Warwickshire men; towns were planted in the

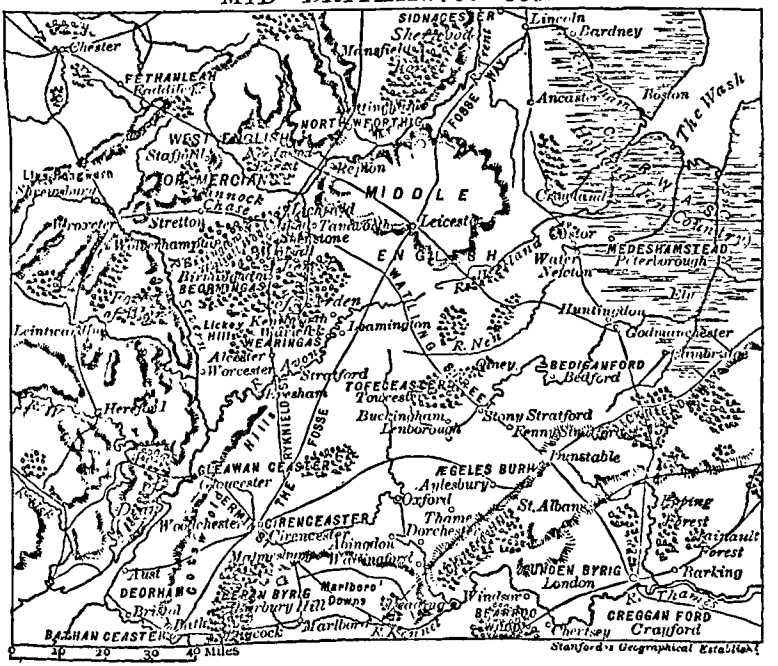
another close to Walsall, and a third at Sedgely, south of Wolverhampton. But beyond these the ground was still richly studded in Camden's day with outliers of the "Wooland," Walsall Wood, Essington Wood, Kingswood, and the like, which show its extension at an earlier time. See map of Staffordshire in Camden's "Britannia" (ed. 1753), vol. i. p. 633.

[1] As late as Elizabeth's time (and Shakspere's time) our Warwickshire was parted into the "Feldon" and the "Wooland" or Wood-land; the first a tract of open pastures between the Avon and the Cotswolds; the second, to the north of the Avon, though not without "pastures and cornfields," yet in the main "clothed with woods" (Camden, "Britannia," ed. 1753, vol. i. 598, 606). The clearing of the "wooland" was in fact only due to the subsequent growth of its iron-works, which "destroyed such prodigious quantities of wood that they laid the country more open, and by degrees made room for the plough," so that "whereas within the memory of man they were supplied with corn from the Feldon," writes Gibson in 1753, they now grew more corn than they needed. By a curious correlative change, as the soil thus cleared proved far more fertile than the clay lands of the Feldon, the latter, whose "fertile fields of corn and verdant pastures" had delighted Camden's eye in 1606, had by Gibson's day become almost wholly pasture land.

2 "As You Like It," act i. sc. i. "(Oliver). Where will the old duke live? (Charles). They say he is already in the forest of Arden, and a many merry men with him; and there they live like the old Robin Hood of England. They say many young gentlemen flock to him every day and fleet the time carelessly, as they did in the golden world."

very heart of its woodlands, and the miner had thinned its clumps with his forges. No such settlement or traces of man broke its solitude when the West-Saxons gazed on the skirts of this huge forest after their victory at Deorham. Even the great roads of the island refrained from piercing it, though

MID-BRITAIN. 700-800.



three of the main lines of communication through Britain ran along its edges. The Fosse-road traversed the open clays between the Avon and the Cotswolds. The Watling Street struck along its north-western border from our Rugby to Tamworth. Even the Ryknield Way, which was probably a mere trackway of the earliest times, crept along the

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western border of the forest beneath the slopes of the Lickey Hills, and only struck across it in its northern and narrower portion past the site of the later Birmingham to the plain of the Tame.

Evesham.

In the broken and volcanic country along the northern border of Arden, there was nothing as yet to show the existence of those mineral treasures which nowadays make this district lurid night and day with the glare of iron-foundries, and hideous with their cinder-heaps. All was still wild forest-land where the little settlement of Wolverhampton told of the wolves who carried off the farmers' sheep and kine into the thickets, while further in its depths, unconscious of its after greatness, lay the little 'ham' of the Beormingas, our Birmingham. It was only on its south-eastern border, in fact, that life and industry as yet touched this woodland. Here, between the forest edge and the slopes of the Cotswolds, the Avon made its way to the Severn valley, and along the vale of the Avon were scattered a few early settlements. Coventry indeed was not to rise for centuries on its waters; but Kenilworth and Leamington were, no doubt, even now quiet townships in this district; the tribe of the Wearingas must have already set up that 'wick' of their own which was to give its name of Wearingawick or Warwick to the whole tract when it became shire-land; Stratford marked the place where the Roman road passed the river by its paved ford on its way to the west; and a little onward a "vill" of the Hwiccan or Mercian kings was rising beside the ruined walls and towers which were all that remained of the Roman Alcester. Heathendom

must still have lingered in the mighty woodland when Bishop Ecgwine of Worcester carried the Gospel into its depths; and we may perhaps see Woden-worshipping miners at Alcester in the dæmons of his legend, who drown the preacher's voice with the din of their hammers. But in spite of their hammers Ecgwine's preaching left a lasting trace behind it. The Bishop heard how a swineherd, coming out of the dark forest into a sunny glade, saw forms which were possibly those of the Three Fair Women of the old German mythology, seated round a mystic bush, and singing their unearthly song. In Ecgwine's fancy these women transformed themselves into a vision of the Mother of Christ; and the silent glade soon became the site of an abbey dedicated to her, and of a town which sprang up under its shelter—the Evesham which was to be hallowed in after time by the fall of Earl Simon of Leicester.[1]

The Fen.

Wilder even than the western woodland was the desolate fen-country on the eastern border of the kingdom which stretched from the 'Holland,' the sunk, hollow land of Lincolnshire, to the channel of the Ouse, a wilderness of shallow waters and reedy islets, wrapt in its own dark mist-veil and tenanted only by flocks of screaming wild-fowl. Here through the liberality of King Wulfhere rose on the western

[1] The abbey was founded in 709 (Haddan and Stubbs, "Councils," iii. 278 *et seq.*). A life of Ecgwine may be found in Macray's "Chronicle of Evesham;" but the rendering of the figures in his vision as the 'Three Women' is a doubtful suggestion of Mr. Wright. For the chronological difficulties of the story, see Stubbs, Dict. Christ., Biog. Art., "Ecgwine," vol. ii. p. 62.

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border of the great morass the abbey of Medeshamstead, a community which grew in after time into our Peterborough. On its northern edge an obscure hermit, Botulf, founded a little house which as ages went by became our Botulf's town or Boston.[1] Further in the fen itself the queen of Ecgfrid, Æthelthryth or Ætheldreda, found a refuge from her husband in the low rise amidst its waters which is crowned nowadays with the noble minster of Ely.[2] It was in the very heart of the fen that Guthlac, a youth of the royal race of Mercia, sought a refuge from the world in the solitude of Crowland.[3] The early life of Guthlac[4] marks the wild barbarism of the times. He spent it after the fashion of young warriors, in private feuds, in sacking and burning town and homestead, and carrying off booty from his foes. Suddenly as he lay sleepless in the forest among his sleeping warband, there rose before him the thought of his crimes and of the doom that waited on him. Such thoughts were stirred in many hearts no doubt by the new Christian faith; but in none did they find a quicker answer. The birds waking with the dawn only roused his comrades to hear Guthlac's farewell. At the abbey of Repton, the burying-place as yet of the royal line of Mercia, he shore off the long hair which

[1] Botulf was visited about 670 by Ceolfrid, afterwards Abbot of Wearmouth, Anon. Hist. Abbatum. Bæda, "Opera Minora" (ed. Stevenson), p. 319.

[2] For Ely and its name, see Bæda, H. E. lib. iv. c. 19, where he gives the story of Ætheldreda.

[3] For Crowland, even in the sixteenth century, see Camden's "Britannia" (ed. 1753), vol. i. p. 551.

[4] The name of Guthlac was that of his house, the Guthlacings.

marked the noble; and then, moved by the life of hermit saints which he read there, betook himself to the heart of the fen. Its birds became his friends; they perched unhindered on shoulder and knee, and rested in the thatch that covered the little cell he had hollowed out in what seems to have been a plundered burial-ground. "He who in cleanness of heart is one with God, all things are one with him," commented the recluse; "he who denies himself the converse of men wins the converse of birds and beasts and the company of angels." But it was harder than Guthlac fancied to escape the converse of men. His solitude was broken by crowds of devotees, by abbot and monk, by thegn and ceorl, as they flocked over the fen to the solitary's cell; and so great was the reverence which he won that two years after his death the stately abbey of Crowland was raised over his tomb. Earth was brought in boats to form a site; the buildings rested on oaken piles driven into the marsh, a stone church replaced the hermit's cell, and the toil of the new brotherhood changed the pools around them into fertile meadow land.[1]

The Thames Valley.

If we turn from the Fens to the Thames valley we see the new religion gathering new centres of social life along the line of the great river. A wild legend, the legend of S. Frideswide, first gives us a glimpse in the midst of the eighth century of the future Oxford, as yet no doubt but a few fishermen's huts creeping up along the line of the later "Fish Street" from the ford across the Thames to the little monastery that

1 Guthlac's Life is printed in Acta Sanct. Boll. at April xi.

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had risen over the saint's remains;[1] and a little further along the river, in some meadows beside its southern bank, there had already risen in the later days of Ealdhelm a religious house which was to acquire a far different celebrity from that of Frideswide, the abbey under whose walls grew up the town of Abingdon.[2] As Abingdon rose into light, the brief greatness of a spot lower down the river was passing away. The present village of Dorchester probably occupies the site of a Roman borough; and the dyke that guarded the town, as well as a huge hill-fort of the Britons in its neighbourhood, shows that the spot had been of importance in very early times. Here Birinus fixed the bishop's stool of the West-Saxons, and here in the presence of Oswald the West-Saxon king submitted to baptism. But the removal of the West-Saxon bishopric to Winchester gave a fatal blow to the place; and even a later transfer to it of the Mercian bishopric failed to raise it into

[1] Frideswide is not mentioned by Bæda, but an Anglo-Saxon catalogue of saints states her to have been buried at Oxford, and Domesday shows her canons to have been long established there. Her story first appears in Malmesbury, and is probably a genuine tradition. The expanded life by Prior Philip may be found in the Bollandist "Acta Sanctorum," Oct. viii. p. 560; and see article in "Dictionary of Christian Biography," vol. ii. p. 563.

[2] The early history of Abingdon is obscure. Hean, a nephew of Cissa, an under-king of our Berkshire in the days of Centwine, seems to have founded the original monastery on folk-land at Abba's dun, "where Chilswell farm now stands," says Professor Bright, "Early English Church History," p. 262. Ine, however, took back the land, and when the house was refounded twenty years later it was set up on its present site, then called Sheovesham.

importance. Yet further along the Thames valley the great foundation of Henry I. had not begun the transformation of the settlement of the Readings into our thriving Reading; nor was Windsor to be crowned for centuries yet by the group of royal and ecclesiastical buildings which preserve the glories of the Plantagenets. But the bishops of the East-Saxons were already establishing their home at Fulham; in the little house amid the marshes of the Tyburn which claimed King Sæberht as its founder lay a germ of the coming Westminster; and if no great abbey within its walls, besides its own church of St. Paul, marked the devotion of London, that of its bishop Erconwald was shown by his two foundations; one for himself at Chertsey, the first trace of life we have as yet encountered in the new Surrey; the other for his sister Æthelburh at Barking. The legends of Barking, as Bæda has preserved them, are full of the poetry of monastic life, of those visions of angelic glory, those sounds of angelic music, that gave beauty to its very trivialities. Light above all was the plaything of this religious fancy. It was the resting of an unearthly brightness on the spot that guided the nuns of Barking in the choice of their burial-ground; the light, they said, that was to receive the souls of its handmaidens had shown the place where their bodies should rest till the rising again. "Let your candle burn as it may," murmured a sister of the same house to those who watched her dying through the night, "it is no light of mine; my light will come to me at the dawn of day!" The body of their dead

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abbess as the nuns in vision saw it floating heavenward glowed with a celestial splendour beyond the sun.[1]

Mid-Britain.

In a survey of the rest of the Mercian kingdom we meet with little more than names, but even names have a living interest when they reveal to us for the first time the existence of communities which have lived on for a thousand years since, and form actual elements in the England of to-day. As we pass from the valley of the Thames to the valley of the Severn we find that a new English borough, the borough of Cirencester, has already sprung to life on the wreck of the Roman Corinium.[2] The foundation of a monastery by an under-king of the Hwiccas within its walls reveals to us the springing up of a like new life in another of the cities which had been wrecked by Ceawlin's inroad, the city of Bath.[3] Gloucester, though we do not hear of it as yet, may have been growing into being on the site of the third city which defied the West-Saxon king, that of Glevum; but the new masters of the lower Severn valley seem to have found their centre higher up the river, on the very border of the forest of Wyre, in a town whose existence the establishment of one of Theodore's bishoprics discloses to us, the town of Wyre-ceaster or Worcester.[4] If we pass from the Severn to Mid-

[1] Bæda, H. E. lib. iv. c. 7, 8.

[2] Eng. Chron. a. 628.

[3] A monastery at Bath was founded by this under-king Osric in 676.

[4] Worcester was from the first the seat of the Hwiccian bishopric.

Britain itself, we find as yet no mention of Northampton on the upland that now bears its name, nor any trace of the return of life to the ruins of Towcester; but Medeshamstede, as we have seen, was already rising where the upland sloped to the fen, and the little monastery of Oundle shows that life was pushing still higher up the valley of the Nen. Along the Trent itself we find few traces of the new social impulse, though Repton had been called to life on its upper waters by the withdrawal of Abbess Ælfrida to a religious life; and further along the river a like house had gathered at Burton. But the Mercian kings were already established at Tamworth; the Pecsætan had no doubt found a centre in the North-weorthig, which has become our Derby, and the Middle-Engle in our Leicester; while on the great rise to the south of the Humber we see not only communities established at Sidnacester and Bardney, but a new borough of the Lindiswaras, with a stone church founded by Paulinus as its spiritual centre, growing up amongst the ruins of the Roman Lindum.[1]

Ecgfrith of Northumbria

Such was the Mercia whose ecclesiastical organization Theodore was still engaged in completing, when in 678 he was invited by King Ecgfrith to undertake a like organization of Northumbria.[2] Isolated as it had now become from the rest of Britain, Northumbria was far from having sunk from its old renown either in government or war. It still remained, indeed, first among the English states. Ecgfrith had

[1] Bæda, H. E. lib. ii. c. 16. "Lindocolinæ civitatis."

[2] Eddi, "Life of Wilfrid," c. xxiv. "Theodorum cum muneribus . . . invitaverunt."

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succeeded his father Oswiu in 670,[1] and though he made no effort to reverse his father's policy as regards southern Britain, or to attempt to build up again a supremacy over its states, he showed himself resolute to enlarge the bounds of his kingdom by conquests over the Welsh. The Welsh states across the western moors had owned, at least from Oswald's time, the Northumbrian supremacy, but little actual advance had been made by the English in this quarter since the victory of Chester, and northward of the Ribble the land between the moors and the sea still formed a part of the British kingdom of Cumbria. It was from this tract, from what we now know as northern Lancashire and the Lake district, that Ecgfrith's armies chased the Britons in the early years of his reign.[2] The British clergy still fled before the conqueror's sword, and from the sacred spots which they deserted large grants were made by Ecgfrith to the see of York in the country between the Ribble and the Mersey, in Amounderness, and in Cartmell or the vale of the Duddon,[3] the three districts which

[1] Bæda, H. E. iv. 5.

[2] This conquest, like the after conquest of the Picts, lies between his accession in 670 and his strife with Wulfhere of Mercia in 675. See Eddi, "Life of Wilfrid," c. xx.

[3] Wilfrid claimed for his see, "ea loca sancta in diversis regionibus, quæ clerus Brytannus, aciem gladii hostilis manu gentis nostræ fugiens, deseruit. Erat quippe Deo placabile donum, quod religiosi reges tam multas terras Deo ad serviendum pontifici nostro conscripserunt; et haec sunt nomina regionum juxta Rippel, et in Gaedyne, et in regione Dunutinga, et in Caetlævum, in cæterisque locis."—Eddi, "Life of Wilfrid," c. xvii. Mr. Raine in a note on this passage of Eddi says: "Peter of Blois in his missing life of Wilfrid describes these

together make up our present Lancashire;[1] but there was no break in the general policy of the later English conquests, and the rest of the British population remained as tributaries on the soil.[2]

Triumphs over Picts and Mercians.

By the conquest of this western district Northumbria now stretched uninterruptedly from sea to sea from the southern border of Elmet as far north as the city of Carlisle. Carlisle is of interest as the first instance which we have met with of a city in which there seems to have been no break of municipal life as it passed into English hands. Only a few years after its conquest by Ecgfrith we find a monastery founded there;[3] while the city itself and its district

districts thus: 'Scilicet Rible et Hasmundesham et Marchesiæ' (Leland, col. ed. 74, iii. p. 110). By these he seems to mean Amounderness in north Lancashire, and the 'terra inter Ripham et Mersham' (Domes. Book), the country between the Ribble and the Mersey." He points out too that if Gaedyne be identifie with Gilling near Richmond, and Dunutinga, or as Peter of Blois calls it, Duninga, with the country watered by the river Duddon, as well as Caetlaevum with Cartmell, we should have in these districts the whole of the western part of the archdeaconry of Richmond, and thus account for their ecclesiastical connection through it with the see of York.

[1] Cartmell is that district of Lancashire which, isolated from the rest of the county, lies north of Ulverston Bay; while Amounderness may at this time have included the whole tract between the Lune and the Ribble. See Camden's "Britannia" (1753), vol. ii. p. 975, where Amounderness is made to include the Fylde.

[2] Sim. Durh., Historia de S. Cuthberto; Twysden, Dec. Script. p. 69. King Ecgfrith gave "Cartmell et omnes Britannos cum eo" to St. Cuthbert.

[3] Bæda, "Life of Cuthbert," c. xxvii. It seems probable that after Ecgfrith's death his queen entered this monastery. Ibid. c. xxviii.

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became part of the possessions of the see of Lindisfarne,[1] and it is as he stands by its Roman fountain that Cuthbert hears the news of Nectansmere. But the conquest of this district was quickly followed by fresh gains in the north, where Ecgfrith attacked with the same success both the Scots beyond Clydesdale and the Picts over the Firth of Forth.[2] The war indeed in this quarter was forced on him by the Picts, who rose against the yoke of tribute to which they had submitted under Oswiu, and marched with an army which seems to have been gathered from their whole territory in the Highlands on the English border. Ecgfrith met the attack with a comparatively small force, but his victory was so complete that as the Northumbrian Chronicler tells us, two rivers were filled with the corpses of the slain, and the Picts were reduced to so complete a subjection that their territory on the northern bank of the Forth was reckoned from this time as Northumbrian ground.[3] How far Ecgfrith would have pushed his conquests in this quarter had his hands been left free we cannot tell, but the war with the Picts was hardly over when he was forced to meet a more formidable attack on his southern frontier. Wulfhere, as we have seen, had carried the supremacy of Mercia not only over the whole of Mid-Britain, but even as far as the British Channel; and it was as the practical master

[1] Sim. Durh. Hist. Dun. Ecc. i. c. 9. "Lugubaliam quæ Luel vocatur in circuitu quindecim milliaria habentem in augmentum suscepit" (Cuthbertus).

[2] Eddi, c. xxi. "Triumphos ad Aquilonem super Brittones et Scottos."

[3] Eddi, c. xix.

of all Britain south of the Humber, and with a force drawn from every one of its peoples, that he marched on Northumbria with a demand of subjection and tribute.[1] Ecgfrith however was as successful against the Mercians as against the Picts, and though as before his army was inferior in number to that of his opponents, after a bloody encounter he drove Wulfhere from the field, and forced the Mercian king in turn not only to surrender the land of the Lindiswaras, which he had taken from Oswiu in that king's later days,[2] but to pay tribute to Northumbria.[3]

Its monastic colonies.

The death of Wulfhere, which immediately followed this triumph, in 675, and the accession of the more peaceful Æthelred, removed for the time all pressure from the south, and left Northumbria free to carry on a work of industrial development, which was producing results even more striking than those which we have already watched in Mid-Britain. Here as there the movement was in name a monastic one, but the establishment of the monastic colonies which carried life and culture over the land was furthered in the north more than elsewhere by the enormous sweeps of waste which still made up the bulk of Northumbria. Nowhere was this waste so continuous as along the eastern coast. Save at the passage of the Tyne, where the Ælian bridge must now have been dropping into

[1] Eddi, c. xx. "Ulfharius rex Merciorum . . omnes australes populos adversum regnum nostrum concitans, non tam ad bellandum quam ad redigendum sub tributo, servili animo, non regente Deo, proponebat."

[2] Bæda, H. E. lib. iv. c. 3.

[3] "Occisis innumeris regem fugavit, regnumque ejus sub tributo distribuit."—Eddi, c. xx. Bæda, H. E. iv. 12.

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decay, hardly a single settlement had been made along this coast under the Roman rule; and though the Engle conquerors had planted their hams and tuns along its river-valleys, such as those of the Tweed or the Tyne, and had set a few fishing-villages along the shore, the bulk of the country was still untilled and unclaimed of man, and thus passed into the folk-land which lay at the disposal of the Northumbrian kings. Though Edinburgh had been an English fortress since the days of Eadwine, and we already catch sight of Dunbar looking out over its stormy seas,[1] the whole space between them, north of the Lammermoor, was still folk-land in Oswald's day, when it was granted to the monastery at Lindisfarne.[2] It was from the waste country south of the Lammermoor that lands almost as wide were bestowed by Oswiu on a monastery which Ebba was establishing on the coast at Coldingham, as well as on the house of Melrose. The whole of the pastoral country on the banks of the Bowmont between the forest of Jedburgh and the Cheviots seems to have been first reclaimed when it was granted by Oswiu to Cuthbert during his abode at Melrose.[3] South of the Tweed as far as Bamborough, and reaching inland as far as the valley of the Till, lay as desolate a region, which formed part of the domain that Oswald carved out of his folk-land for the neighbouring holy island of Lindisfarne.[4]

[1] Eddi, c. xxxviii., where King Ecgfrith sends Wilfrid a prisoner in "urbem suam Dynbaer."

[2] Hist. de S. Cuthberto; Twysden, Dec. Script., col. 68.

[3] Hodgson Hinde on "Lothian." Archæol. Journ. vol. xiv. p. 311.

[4] Hist. de S. Cuthb.; Twysden, Dec. Script., col. 69.

Lesser tracts were carved out of the district which we now call Durham, and which remained for centuries a wild and almost uninhabited moorland, for the little houses along its shore at Ebb-chester and Hartlepool; while the grants of Ecgfrith and Oswiu to Wearmouth and to Whitby show that the coast district preserved the same character away to the south; in fact, when describing the site which King Oidilwald gave for the monastery of Lastingham in the moorlands which are now known as the forest of Pickering, Bæda calls it a place "which looked more like a lurking-place for robbers and a retreat for wild beasts than a habitation for man."[1]

Their secular character.

Of these colonies the northernmost, save a little house at Tyningham beside Dunbar, was the monastery which Ebba founded at Coldingham, to the south of the great promontory which still preserves her memory in its name of St. Abb's head. Ebba was of the royal line, a daughter of Æthelfrith and a sister of Oswald and Oswiu;[2] and the character which her double house of monks and nuns took even during her life-time shows how much stronger a part was played in these settlements by the social than by the religious impulse. "I have looked into every one's chamber and beds," a heavenly visitant is said to have declared to an Irish ascetic, who reported it to the abbess, "and found none but you busy about the care of the soul; since all of these folk, both men and women, either indulge themselves in sloth and sleep, or wake to commit sin. For even the cells

[1] Bæda, H. E. lib. iii. c. 23.

[2] Bæda, H. E. lib. iv. c. 19; Life of Cuthbert, c. x.

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that were built for praying or reading are now converted into places of feasting, drinking, and talking, while the virgins dedicated to God, whensoever they are at leisure, apply themselves to weaving fine garments."[1] A fire which swept away the abbey of Coldingham was held to have been a judgment of heaven on the worldliness of its inmates,[2] but the tendency to create such settlements only grew stronger as the days went on. Under Ecgfrith's successors the practice became almost universal among the higher nobles and thegns of the court of procuring grants of folk-land under the pretext of establishing a religious house, of drawing to them monks from other monasteries, as well as inducing some of their own servants to take the tonsure and promise monastic obedience to their rule, while themselves often remaining laymen and profiting by their name of abbots to escape from all obligation of military service to the realm.[3] However hotly statesmen or divines might

[1] Bæda, H. E. lib. iv. c. 25.

[2] For the gross moral abuses which sometimes grew out of this loose system of monasticism see letters of Boniface to Æthelbald, Herefrith, and Ecgberht; Stubbs and Haddan, "Councils," vol. iii. 351, 357, 358.

[3] In 749 Æthelbald of Mercia freed all monasteries and churches throughout his realm from taxation and service save for the building of bridges and the defence of strongholds (see the charter in Stubbs and Haddan, "Councils," vol. iii. p. 386); and the same exemption was given in the other kingdoms. Bæda gives a detailed picture of the abuses which resulted in his letter to Ecgberht: "At alii graviore adhuc flagitio, quum sint ipsi laici et nullius vitæ regularis vel usu exerciti, vel amore præditi, data regibus pecunia, emunt sibi sub prætextu monasteriorum construendorum territoria in quibus suæ liberius vacent libidini, et hæc insuper in jus sibi hæreditarium edictis regalibus faciunt

protest from their different points of view against a practice which degraded religion while it weakened the military and political organization of the realm,[1] it is impossible not to see in such settlements as these an effort of Englishmen to free themselves from the trammels of their older existence and to find a more social and industrial life.

Their influence on labour.

Labour indeed first rose into honour through this early monasticism. The story of Eosterwini is typical

ascribi, ipsas quoque litteras privilegiorum suorum quasi veraciter Deo dignas, pontificum, abbatum, et potestatum seculi obtinent subscriptione confirmari. Sicque usurpatis sibi agellulis sive vicis, liberi exinde a divino simul et humano servitio, suis tantum inibi desideriis laici monachis imperantes deserviunt: imo non monachos ibi congregant, sed quoscunque ob culpam inobedientiæ veris expulsos monasteriis alicubi forte oberrantes invenerint, aut evocare monasteriis ipsi valuerint; vel certe quos ipsi de suis satellitibus ad suscipiendam tonsuram promissa sibi obedientia monachica invitare quiverint . . . . Sic per annos circiter triginta, hoc est, ex quo Aldfrid rex humanis rebus ablatus est, provincia nostra vesano illo errore dementata est, ut nullus pene exinde præfectorum extiterit qui non hujusmodi sibi monasterium in diebus suæ præfecturæ comparaverit, suamque simul conjugem pari reatu nocivi mercatus astrinxerit; ac prævalente pessima consuetudine ministri quoque regis ac famuli idem facere sategerint." —Hussey's "Bæda," pp. 339, 340. (See also H. E. lib. v. c. 23.)

[1] We see the kings resisting the excessive creation of such houses, doubtless on this ground, from the beginning of the eighth century. Boniface, in a letter written between 744 and 747, remonstrated with Æthelbald of Mercia, "quod multa privilegia ecclesiarum et monasteriorum fregisses;" and adds, "privilegia ecclesiarum in regno Anglorum intemerata et inviolata permanserunt usque ad tempora Ceolredi Regis Mercionum et Osredi Regis Derorum et Berniciorum." (Stubbs and Haddan, "Councils," iii. 354, 355.) Ceolred was king of Mercia 709-715; Osred of Northumbria, 705-716.

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of the change which this movement brought about in men's conceptions of the dignity of toil. Eosterwini was a thegn of king Ecgfrith's, who at the age of twenty-four "laid down his arms," and entering the monastery of Wearmouth threw himself cheerfully into the toil that he found going on about him. "It was a pleasure to him to be employed along with the rest of the brethren in winnowing and grinding corn, in milking the ewes and cows, in working in the bakehouse, the garden, and the kitchen, and in every other occupation in the monastery. . . . When he went out anywhere for the furtherance of the business of the monastery, wherever he found the brethren at work it was his wont to join them forthwith in their labour, whether by guiding the plough-handle, or working iron with the forge-hammer, or wielding the winnowing-fan."[1] We see the same new drift of feeling yet more picturesquely in the figure of Owini, a head thegn of the household of Ecgfrith's queen, as he stands at the gate of the monastery of Lastingham, "clad only in a plain garment, and carrying an axe and mattock in his hand, thereby intimating that he did not go to the monastery to live idle as some do, but to labour." Once admitted as a brother Owini, carried out his purpose; "for as he was less capable of meditating on the Holy Scriptures, so he the more earnestly applied himself to the labour of his hands . . . . and whilst the brethren were engaged within in reading he was busy without at work."[2] The mere sight of nobles

[1] Vit. Abbatum; Hussey's "Bæda," p. 322.

[2] Bæda, H. E. lib. iv. c. iii.

such as these laying down the noble's arms, and voluntarily sharing with ceorl and serf about them the labour of their hands, must have raised labour itself into a new esteem among their fellow-men, and aided in that development of industry which was changing the whole face of the country.

Their influence on poetry.

But the movement did more than exalt labour. To its social side we are indebted for the birth of our literature. While Ealdhelm was singing his songs on the bridge at Malmesbury, a singer of far other sort was building up a great English poem on the Northumbrian coast.[1] The most notable and wealthy of the religious houses of Northumbria was that of Streonashalh, an abbey which Oswiu reared for Hild and the child he had vowed to God as a thankoffering for his victory at the Winwæd.[2] The love of solitude and retirement which the northern Church drew from its Celtic founders told in the choice of the spot. Much of its loneliness indeed has now passed away: for sunset, as it strikes along the gorge of the Esk in a glory of colour, lights up as with fire the ranks of red-tiled houses in which the busy seaport of Whitby clings to the slopes on either side the river-mouth. But on the cliff above it the weather-beaten ruins of an exquisite abbey church, which rose at a later time on the site of Hild's monastery, still stand out dark and lonely against the sky, and as we look from them over land and sea,

[1] We do not know the exact date of Cædmon's poem, but as it was read to Hild, who died in 680, it must have been composed some time in Ecgfrith's reign.

[2] In 657 (Bæda, H. E. lib. iii. c. 24).

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the solitude which she chose for her home comes back to us. Whitby lies hidden in its river-valley; the bleak moors around are thinly threaded by half-buried lines of woodland, for the very trees take shelter in deep gorges which carry the moor waters to the sea. The fringe of culture that now creeps along the moorland's edge, the cottages dotted over the distance, the fishing hamlets huddled at the mouth of streamlets whose hollows break the crumbling line of marly cliffs, the herring-boats scattered over the colourless sea, the smoke trail of vessels on the grey horizon, hardly lessen the impression of loneliness. As we look over the wide stretch of country whose billowy swells and undulations lift themselves dark at eventide from the mist-veil that lies white around them, we see again the waste in which Hild reared her home, its grey reaches of desolate water, skimmed but by the white wings of gull or albatross, its dark tracks of desolate moor silent save for the wolf's howl or the eagle's scream.

Cædmon.

The stern grandeur of the spot blends fitly with the thought of the poet who broke its stillness with the first great song that English singer had wrought since our fathers came to Britain. For the memory that endears Whitby to us is not that of Hild or of the scholars and priests who gathered round her. Her abbey indeed became from the first the greatest foundation of the north, for Hild was the daughter of Hereric and the great-grandchild of Ælla, and though years of change had passed by and her line had ceased to rule, she still drew a reverence as one of the last of the royal stock of Deira. Her counsel was sought

even by nobles and kings; and the double monastery over which she ruled became a seminary of bishops and priests.[1] The sainted John of Beverley was among her scholars. But the name which really throws glory over Whitby is the name neither of king nor bishop but of a cowherd of the house.[2] Though well advanced in years Cædmon had learnt nothing of the art of verse, the alliterative jingle so common among his fellows, "wherefore being sometimes at feasts, when all agreed for glee's sake to sing in turn, he no sooner saw the harp come towards him than he rose from the board and went homewards. Once when he had done thus, and gone from the feast to the stable, where he had that night charge of the cattle, there appeared to him in his sleep One who said, greeting him by name, 'Sing, Cædmon, some song to Me.' 'I cannot sing,' he answered; 'for this cause left I the feast and came hither.' He who talked with him answered, 'However that be, you shall sing to Me.' 'What shall I sing?' rejoined Cædmon. 'The beginning of created things,' replied He. When the cowherd stood before Hild at daybreak and told his dream, abbess and brethren alike concluded 'that heavenly grace had been given him by the Lord.' They translated for Cædmon a passage in Holy Writ, bidding him, if he could, put the same into verse. The next morning he gave it them composed in excellent verse; whereon the abbess, understanding the divine grace in the man, bade him quit the secular habit and take on him the monastic life."

[1] Bæda, H. E. lib. iv. c. 23.
[2] Bæda, H. E., lib. iv. c. 24.

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Cædmon's Poem.

Piece by piece the sacred story was thus thrown into Cædmon's poem. "He sang of the creation of the world, of the origin of man, and of all the history of Israel; of their departure from Egypt and entering into the Promised Land; of the incarnation, passion, resurrection and ascension of Christ; of the terror of future judgment, the horror of hell-pangs, and the joys of heaven." To men of that day this sudden burst of song seemed a thing necessarily divine. "Others after him strove to compose religious poems, but none could vie with him, for he learned the art of poetry not from men nor of men, but from God." It is hard for a modern reader to enter into Bæda's enthusiasm, for not only are parts of the poems which have passed under Cædmon's name due to other writers, though of the same poetic school, but they have reached us only in fragments of a later West-Saxon version,[1] and their Biblical paraphrases are often literal and tedious. But where the herdsman gives the rein to his own fancy, he at once shows himself a great poet. He wrought no change indeed in the outer form of English song. His verse is like that of other singers, accented and alliterative, without conscious art or development or the delight that

[1] Save nine lines of the original opening which have been preserved in an early manuscript of Bæda's history. Recent criticism restricts the work of Cædmon to the poem of "Genesis," assigning "Exodus" and "David" to a nameless successor, and the closing fragment, known as "Christ and Satan," to an altogether later time. Even in the "Genesis," verses 245-851, which include the famous passage about Satan, are now believed to be an interpolation in Cædmon's work, drawn perhaps from a lost Old German poem.

springs from reflection, a verse swift and direct, but leaving behind it a sense of strength rather than of beauty, obscured too by harsh metaphors and involved construction. But it is eminently the verse of warriors, the brief passionate expression of brief passionate emotions. Image after image, phrase after phrase, starts out vivid, harsh, and emphatic. The very metre is rough with a sort of self-violence and repression; the verses fall like sword-strokes in the thick of battle. His love of natural description, the back-ground of melancholy which gives its pathos to English verse, Cædmon only shared with earlier singers. But the faith of Christ had brought in, as we have seen, new realms of fancy. The legends of the heavenly light, Bæda's story of "The Sparrow," show the side of English temperament to which Christianity appealed—its sense of the vague, vast mystery of the world and of man, its dreamy revolt against the narrow bounds of experience and life. It was this new poetic world which combined with the old in the epic of Cædmon. On the other hand the enthusiasm for the Christian God, faith in whom had been bought so dearly by years of desperate struggle, breaks out in long rolls of sonorous epithets of praise and adoration. The temper of the poet brings him near to the earlier fire and passion of the Hebrew, as the events of his time brought him near to the old Bible history with its fights and wanderings.[1] "The wolves sing their dread evensong; the fowls of war, greedy of battle, dewy feathered,

[1] The "Exodus," as I have said, is now assigned to another singer: but he is of Cædmon's school.

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screamed around the host of Pharaoh," as wolf howled and eagle screamed round the host of Penda. Everywhere Cædmon is a type of the new grandeur, depth, and fervour of tone which the German race was to give to the religion of the East.

Effect of monastic movement on art.

English poetry however was far from ending with Cædmon. His successors rivalled him in grandeur and sometimes surpassed him in art. The lyrics and eclogues of Cynewulf,[1] a minstrel at the Northumbrian court in the middle of the century, are the noblest and most finished monuments of Old English verse; and the bulk of the poems which we now possess in West-Saxon versions are held by modern critics to be in reality fragments of the poetic literature which at this time flourished so abundantly in Northumbria. Meanwhile the same impulse that gave Englishmen their earliest poetry brought back to Britain its art. Benedict Biscop had not witnessed the triumph of his party in the Synod of Whitby, for he had already departed on a fresh pilgrimage to Rome; and though he accompanied Theodore on his journey to England, it was only at the close of a fresh pilgrimage to the shrine of the Apostles that he again appeared in Northumbria in the year 674.[2] Ecgfrith at once made him a grant from the folk-land at the mouth of the Wear; but Benedict had hardly begun the erection of his monastery when he passed into Gaul to find

[1] Hazlitt's ed. of Warton's Hist. Engl. Poetry, vol. ii. Introd. pp. 16, 17.

[2] The life of Benedict is given by Bæda in the opening of his "Lives of the Abbots of Wearmouth." Hussey's Bæda, p. 316 *et seq.*

masons "who could build him a church of stone after the Roman style."[1] Nothing shows more vividly the utter destruction of the Roman life in Britain than the fact that with Roman buildings still rising, even if half ruined, before their eyes, the very tradition of the building art had passed away, and that architecture had to be brought back to Britain as a foreign thing. With architecture[2] returned other arts. Glass-making was as unknown in the island as building, and it was again from Gaul that Benedict imported glass-makers to glaze the windows of his church and to teach Englishmen their art.[3] It was in the same way to the sacred vessels and vestments which he was forced to bring from abroad that the English owed their knowledge of the arts of gold-work and embroidery, in both of which they soon came to excel. A later visit to Rome brought to their knowledge the art of painting, and the stiff Byzantine figures with which Benedict adorned the interior of his church, the ring of Apostles around its apse with the Virgin in their midst, the stories from Gospel history which lined its southern wall, and the Apocalyptical visions which covered its northern wall, whether they were paintings or mosaics, are memorable as the first instances in

[1] "Gallias petens cæmentarios qui lapideam sibi ecclesiam juxta Romanorum . . . morem facerent . . . attulit."—Bæda, Vit. Abbat. p. 319.

[2] So famous did the Northumbrian architects become, that they were called even over the Forth by King Naiton of the Picts. Bæda, H. E. lib. v. c. 21.

[3] "Vitri factores artifices Britanniis eatenus incognitos . . . . et Anglorum ex eo gentem hujusmodi artificium nosse ac discere, fecerunt."—Bæda, Vit. Abbat. p. 319.

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the new England of an art which was to give us a Reynolds and a Turner.

No buildings in northern Britain could vie with Benedict's Church at Wearmouth save the churches which his friend Wilfrid was raising at the same time in the western moorlands at Ripon, and at Hexham in the valley of the Tyne. Work of artistic restoration was as much a passion with the one as the other, and if Wilfrid had visited Gaul in part for the purpose of consecration, it was in part too to gather "the builders and teachers of nearly every art whom he brought with him in his train on his return to Britain."[1] Through the nine years that followed his arrival at York, the greatness of Bishop Wilfrid seemed to vie with that of Ecgfrith. The new monastic foundations regarded themselves as his monasteries, and at a later time he could boast of the thousands of his monks, while the Northumbrian thegns sent their children to be brought up in his household, whether with the end of their becoming clerks or of serving the king as secular nobles. His wealth and generosity seemed boundless. At one time he entertained Ecgfrith in a feast that lasted three days and three nights; his gifts were lavished on his monasteries and clergy; and his train as he rode through the country was like an army in its numbers and in the kingly splendour of its vesture and weapons.[2] Friendly as the relations of the King and Bishop were at first, we can hardly

[1] Eddi. c. xiv. "Cum cantoribus Ædde et Eonan, et cæmentariis, omnisque pæne artis institoribus, regionem suam rediens."

[2] Eddi. c. xxiv. "Innumerum exercitum sodalium regalibus vestimentis et armis ornatum."

wonder that a pomp such as this brought dissension between them,[1] or that Ecgfrith seized on the projects of Theodore as enabling him to curtail a diocese which stretched over the whole extent of his realm.

Theodore in Northumbria.

In 678 Theodore appeared in Northumbria at the King's summons, and we must presume that Wilfrid's resistance to his plans was notorious, for without waiting for his presence the primate deposed him from his see, and proceeded to the division of his diocese. The same plan of falling back on the older tribal divisions was followed here as elsewhere. Eata was set at Hexham as bishop of the Bernicians, and Bosa at York as bishop of the Deirans, while Eadhed was set as bishop over the Lindiswaras.[2] After a formal protest against the primate's action Wilfrid left Northumbria to carry his appeal to Rome, where an agent of Theodore's awaited him on his arrival, and the cause was formally heard and debated at the Papal court. In his appeal Wilfrid virtually consented to a division of his diocese if Rome saw need of this,[3] but he claimed the annulling of the sentence of deposition as uncanonical, and his claim was allowed. With bulls and letters from the Papal see[4] he again appeared at Ecgfrith's court; but they

[1] The story of Wilfrid's friends was, that the quarrel began in Ecgfrith's domestic troubles with his queen Ætheldreda and the part which Wilfrid took in them.

[2] Bæda, H. E. lib. iv. c. 12.

[3] "Et si rursus in eadem parochia, cui præfui, præsules adhibere præviderit, saltem tales jubeat prævidere promovendos, cum quibus possim, pacifica atque tranquilla inter nos concordia obtinente, Deo unanimiter deservire."—Eddi. c. xxx.

[4] Eddi. c. xxxiv.

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were rejected as having been obtained by bribery,[1] and by the order of the Witan Wilfrid was thrown into prison, and only released at the end of nine months. Even then Ecgfrith's hostility prevented his finding a refuge in either Mercia or Wessex, and he at last only succeeded in hiding himself behind the screen of the Andredsweald among the South Saxons.

Conversion of South Saxons.

The South Saxons were the one English people who still remained Pagan, for though their king Ædilwalch had been baptized at Wulfhere's bidding some twenty years before,[2] and an Irish missionary, Dicul, had set up a little monastery at Bosham, yet no impression seems to have been made on the people at large. It was not the first time that Wilfrid had encountered them, for on his return from his consecration in Gaul the ship in which he was crossing the Channel had been driven upon their shores, and the wild wreckers had rushed to plunder it with threats of death to the crew if they resisted them. A priest, who standing on a high mound strove by incantations to "bind the hands" of the sailors, was struck dead by a stone flung from the ship, and so wild was the rage of the people at his fall that it was only after a fierce conflict that the rise of the tide, floating the vessel again, enabled Wilfrid and his men to escape to Sandwich.[3] Their wild barbarism was shown yet more in the famine which was ravaging the country when Wilfrid now reached it. Rather than die tamely of hunger, forty or fifty men would mount a cliff, and joining hands fling

[1] "Diffamaverunt . . . ut pretio redempta essent scripta." Eddi. c. xxxiv.

[2] Bæda, H. E. lib. iv. c. 13.

[3] Eddi. c. xiii.

themselves together into the sea.[1] They seem not even to have possessed the knowledge of fishing, and it was partly by the skill with which he used this means of allaying their wants that Wilfrid succeeded in bringing them over to Christianity. Those who refused had to submit to their king's command;[2] and it was in the midst of this new flock that Wilfrid remained for some five years in unaccustomed quiet on the land which Ædilwalch granted to him at Selsey.

Completion of Theodore's work.

Meanwhile Theodore completed his work in the north by the creation of two fresh bishoprics, one of them at Lindisfarne, and the other far away at Abercorn across the Firth of Forth in the province of the Picts. The three years' delay before this final step in 682[3] was probably due to a war that sprang up between Mercia and Northumbria in the year that followed the opening of the Primate's work in the north. The country of the Lindiswaras still remained a subject of contention between the two kingdoms. It was assailed in 679 even by the peaceful Æthelred, and the armies of the two kings met in a bloody contest on the banks of the Trent.[4] The strife was brought to an end by the intervention of Theodore, and the position which the Archbishop had attained was shown by the acceptance on the part of both states of a treaty of peace which he drew up, and

[1] Bæda, H. E. iv. 13.

[2] Eddi. c. xli. "Quidam voluntarie, alii vero coacti regis imperio, idolatriam deserentes."

[3] Bæda, H. E. iv. 12.

[4] Bæda, H. E. iv. 21.

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by the consent of Northumbria to an abandonment of its supremacy over the Lindiswaras.[1] Such a consent however shows that Ecgfrith's power was now fatally shaken. The old troubles revived on his northern frontier, where the Scots of Argyle would seem to have received aid in some rising from the men of their blood across the Irish Channel, for in 684 the Northumbrian fleet swept the Irish shores[2] in a raid which seemed like sacrilege to those who loved the home of Aidan and Columba; and where in 685 a rising of the Picts forced Ecgfrith's army again to cross the Firth of Forth.

Nectansmere.

A sense of coming ill weighed on Northumbria, and its dread was quickened by a memory of the curses which had been pronounced by the Irish bishops on the king in vengeance for the ravages of his fleet. Nowhere was this sense of coming ill more vivid than in the mind of Cuthbert. Cuthbert had remained at Lindisfarne through a great secession which followed on the Synod of Whitby,[3] and become prior of the dwindled company of brethren,[4] now torn with endless disputes, against which his patience and good-humour struggled in vain. Worn out at last he fled to a little island of basaltic rock, one of a group not far from Ida's fortress of Bamborough, strewn for the most part with kelp and sea-weed, the home of the gull and the seal.[5] In the midst of it rose his hut of

[1] Bæda, H. E. lib. iv. c. 12.
[2] Bæda, H. E. lib. iv. c. 26.
[3] Bæda, H. E. lib. iii. c. 26.
[4] Bæda, Life of Cuthbert, c. xvi.
[5] Bæda, Life of Cuthbert, c. xvii. *et seq.*

rough stones and turf, dug deep into the rock and roofed with logs and straw. It was the growing reverence for his sanctity that dragged Cuthbert back, after years of this seclusion, to fill the vacant see of Lindisfarne.[1] He entered Carlisle, which the King had bestowed upon his bishopric, at a moment when all were waiting for news of Ecgfrith's campaign; and as he bent over a Roman fountain which still stood unharmed amongst the ruins of Carlisle, the anxious bystanders thought they caught words of ill-omen falling from the old man's lips. "Perhaps," Cuthbert seemed to murmur, "at this very hour the peril of the fight is over and done." "Watch and pray," he said, when they questioned him on the morrow; "watch and pray." In a few days more a solitary fugitive, escaped from the slaughter, told that the Picts under Bruidi, their King, had turned desperately to bay as the English army entered Fife; and that Ecgfrith and the flower of his nobles lay, a ghastly ring of corpses, on the far-off moorland of Nectansmere.[2]

Theodore's death.

Terrible as was the blow to Northumbria it removed the last difficulty in Theodore's path. He was now drawing near the close of his life, and anxious ere he died to secure his work of organization by the reconciliation of the one prelate who still opposed it. Wilfrid, too, was backed by Rome, and to set at nought the judgment of Rome must have seemed to the Primate a practical undoing of his earlier efforts

[1] Bæda, H. E. lib. iv. c. 28.

[2] Bæda, Life of Cuthbert (Op. Min. Stevenson), c. 27. Sim. Dur. Hist. Dun. Ecc. (Twysden Dec. Script.), i. c. 9.

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to bring about the submission of Britain to the papal see. The personal hostility of Ecgfrith had hitherto stood in the way of any measures of conciliation; but on his fall at Nectansmere Theodore at once summoned Wilfrid to a conference at London, and a compromise was arranged between the two prelates. By the intercession of the primate with the new Northumbrian king Alchfrid,[1] Wilfrid was restored to the see of York; but the work of Theodore in the north was left intact, for the see to which Wilfrid returned was simply that of the Deiri,[2] while the Bernician sees of Lindisfarne and Hexham remained in the hands of their former occupants.[3] The submission of Wilfrid was the last success of Theodore in his plan of organization; it was soon followed indeed by the primate's death in 690. His work, as we have seen, had been simply an organization of the episcopate, for with the station or revenues of the lower clergy the Archbishop does not seem to have dealt. But when once the broad outlines of this organization had been laid down in his arrangement of dioceses, the internal development of the English Church followed the general mode of other churches. The settlement of the episcopate was succeeded during the next hundred years by the development of a parish system. The loose system of the mission-station, the monastery from which priest and bishop went forth on journey after journey to preach and baptize, as Aidan went forth from Lindisfarne or Cuthbert from Melrose, naturally

[1] Bæda, H. E. v. 19.

[2] See Stubbs and Haddan, Councils, vol. iii. p. 171, note.

[3] Eddi. c. xliii. xliv.

disappeared as the land became Christian. The missionaries became settled clergy. The township or group of townships which fell within the holding or patronage of an English noble or landowner became the parish, and his chaplain its parish priest, as the King's chaplain had become the bishop, and the kingdom his diocese. A settled revenue and a fixed code of law were the other pressing needs of the ecclesiastical order; and at the close of the eighth century a source of permanent endowment for the clergy was found in the revival of the Jewish payment of tithes, and in the annual gift to Church purposes of a tenth of the produce of the soil; while discipline within the Church itself was provided for by an elaborate code of sin and penance[1] in which the principle of compensation which lay at the root of Teutonic legislation crept into the relations between God and the soul.

[1] The first English penitential is that of Theodore, which may be found in Stubbs and Haddan, Councils, vol. iii. p. 173, &c.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE THREE KINGDOMS.

690—829.

Political disunion of Britain.

FOR the next hundred years, from the death of Theodore to the accession of Ecgbert, the Church which the primate had moulded into shape exercised an ever deepening influence on English feeling. In spite of the continuance of political disunion, the drift towards a national unity grew more and more irresistible. If England could not find a national life in the supremacy of any of its states, it found such a life in the Church; and while the energies of its secular powers were wasted in jealousy or strife, the weight of the Church which embraced them all became steadily greater. But throughout the whole of this period it was the Church alone which expressed this national consciousness. Politically, the hope of a national union grew fainter with every year; and at the moment of Theodore's death such a hope seemed almost at an end. Northumbria had definitely sheered off into provincial isolation, and the event which marked the close of Theodore's primacy, the revival of the West-Saxons, completed that parting of the

land between three states of nearly equal power out of which it seemed impossible that unity could come.

The Three Kingdoms. 690-829.

Since their overthrow at Faddiley, a hundred years before, the West-Saxons had been weakened by anarchy and civil war. So terribly had their strength been broken that even the Britons had in turn assailed them, while both of the rival English powers had attacked and defeated them. Eadwine had routed them with a great slaughter. Penda had not only routed them, but taken from them their lands along the lower Severn. Wulfhere had carried on the struggle with the same success: he had torn from them the supremacy over Essex and London, which they had won after the wreck of Æthelbert's overlordship, and then pushing across the Thames had mastered the West-Saxon district of Surrey to the south of it. But in spite of these losses the real strength of the Gewissas had been in no ways lessened. Their defeats had been simply owing to their internal divisions, and these divisions never broke that oneness which was the special characteristic of their national life. Mercia had been made by the fusion of many different states, and even Northumbria had been created by the forced union of two warring peoples. But Wessex had grown into being through the simple extension over its surface of one West-Saxon people; and when divisions rent it asunder, they were divisions, not in the body of the people itself, but simply in its kingly house. Each fragment of Welsh ground, as it was won, seems to have been made into an under

The West-Saxons.

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kingdom for some one of the royal kin; and it was the continual struggle of these under-kings against the ruler whom they owned as the head king of the race, a struggle begotten no doubt from the yet more fatal contest of the houses of Ceawlin and Cutha for the head kingship itself, which distracted the energies of the West-Saxons.[1]

Revival of Wessex.

But whenever these causes of distraction were removed, each interval of order showed that the warlike vigour of the people was as great as of old. A short restoration of tranquillity under Cenwealh sufficed, as we have seen, to give them back their superiority over the Britons, and to push their frontier to the Parret.[2] A second interval of order in 682 strengthened King Centwine to drive the Britons as far as the Quantocks. And at this moment a third rally of the Gewissas enabled them to turn on their assailants to the east, and again after a few years' struggle to take rank with the two rival powers of Britain. Losses and gains indeed had strangely altered the aspect of Wessex since the days of Ceawlin. In those days its western border stopped at Selwood and the valley of the Frome, while its future extension pointed northward from the territory it had won on the Cotswolds and the Severn valley towards the valleys of the Weaver and the Dee. But in the years that had passed since Ceawlin's fall not only had any extension of Wessex in this direction become impossible, but she had actually lost the territory

[1] Freeman's "Ine," Part I. Somersetshire Archæol. Proceed. vol. xviii.

[2] Eng. Chron. a. 652, 658, 682.

of the Hwiccas, and her northern frontier ran along the Avon by Bath to the upper valley of the Thames. The only part of central Britain which she preserved at this time was the district of the Four Towns, a district equivalent to our Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire; while on the east she had lost Surrey and the Isle of Wight, and had been even forced to cede to the Mercian king the little Jutish districts of the Meonwaras on the Southampton Water. It seemed as if her extension could now be only to the south-west; and in this quarter the conquests of Cenwealh and Centwine, carrying their frontier in this region as far as the Quantocks, had already added to Wessex a reach of territory whose extent and fertility did much to compensate for the losses elsewhere.

Its Conquest of Southern Britain.

But the West-Saxons were far from consenting to be permanently shut in on the east by the border line that Wulfhere had drawn round them. When Ceadwalla, a king of Ceawlin's line, mounted the West-Saxon throne in 685,[1] and, after crushing the rival under-kings of the house of Cerdic, gathered all the Gewissas beneath his sway, the strength of his realm was at once seen in the rapidity with which it broke through this frontier. In some months of fierce fighting Ceadwalla again set up the West-Saxon supremacy over Sussex, and made the Isle of Wight his own after a massacre of its inhabitants.[2] From Sussex

[1] Eng. Chron. a. 685.

[2] Bæda, H. E., lib. iv. c. 15, 16. If we accept Malmesbury's statement (Gest. Pontif; Savile, Script. post Bædam, p. 133), Sussex lay within Æthelbert's imperium, and passed on the

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Ceadwalla pushed on to Kent; but his attempt to extend his rule over all Southern Britain met with a more luckless issue. He was himself repulsed in a first campaign; a second saw his brother Mul burned in a house which he was plundering; and in 688 Ceadwalla threw down his crown in disgust and withdrew from the land to die a pilgrim at Rome.[1] His work, however, found better fortunes in the hands of his successor Ine. After the close of a civil war which broke out on Ceadwalla's withdrawal, Ine, who, like his predecessor, was of the branch of Ceawlin, succeeded in again uniting the Gewissas under a single sway; and so vigorous were his attacks upon Kent that in 694 the realm paid the blood-fine for Mul and bowed to the West-Saxon supremacy.[2] Its submission carried Ine's rule along the whole southern coast from Dorset to Thanet; and we may believe that not only the whole land south of the Thames but also Essex passed under the West-Saxon supremacy, as we find London from this time no longer in Mercian hands, but owning Ine as its lord.[3]

wreck of it under the supremacy of the West-Saxons. In Wulfhere's day it was certainly under Mercia; but it had probably slipped away of late from Mercian rule, as it had again become heathen.

[1] Eng. Chron. a. 686, 687, 688. Will. Malm. Gest. Reg. (Hardy), i. 46. Bæda, H. E. v. 7.

[2] Eng. Chron. a. 694. Malm. Gest. Reg. i. p. 48.

[3] Ine speaks of Earconwald, the bishop of London and the East-Saxons from 675 to 693, as "my bishop," in the opening of his Laws (Thorpe, "Laws and Institutes," vol. i. p. 103). London would thus seem to have submitted before the close of the contest with Kent. In a letter dated 705, we have notice of quarrels between Ine and the East-Saxon rulers who had

How these possessions were torn from Æthelred's grasp we cannot tell, for under Æthelred Mercian history is all but a blank, and there is nothing to show whether Ine owed his successes to the sword or to some civil strife which distracted the Mercian realm.[1] In 704, after a reign of nearly thirty years, Æthelred withdrew to a monastery: and his nephew Coenred, the son of Wulfhere, succeeded him on the Mercian throne.[2] The conflict with Wessex was still, however, deferred: for Ine, content with his gains south of Thames, turned to a new field of conquest on his border in the west. Here he took up the work of Cenwealh and Centwine by marching in 710 on the British King Geraint.[3] Shrunken as it was from its old area, the realm of Dyvnaint still stretched from the Quantocks to the Land's End, and its king seems to have exercised some supremacy across the Bristol Channel over the princes of the opposite coast.[4] The extent of Geraint's dominions made him the first among the British princes of his day. Even the English regarded him as a powerful ruler, and Ealdhelm addressed him as "the glorious lord of the western realm."[5] But

Conquests from Dyvnaint.

entertained exiles from Wessex. Stubbs and Haddan, Councils. vol. iii. p. 274.

[1] In 697 Æthelred's wife, Osthryth, was put to death by the "primates" of Southumbria. Eng. Chron. a. 697. Bæda. H. E. lib. v. c. 24. After this he seems to have made over Southumbria to Wulfhere's son, Coenred, to whom he gave up the throne in 704, retiring to the monastery of Bardney.

[2] Bæda, H. E. v. 19, 24. [3] Eng. Chron. a. 710.

[4] See Freeman's "Ine," Somerset. Archæol. Proceedings, vol. xviii.

[5] "Domino gloriosissimo occidentalis regni sceptra gubernanti." Stubbs and Haddan, "Councils," vol. iii. p. 268.

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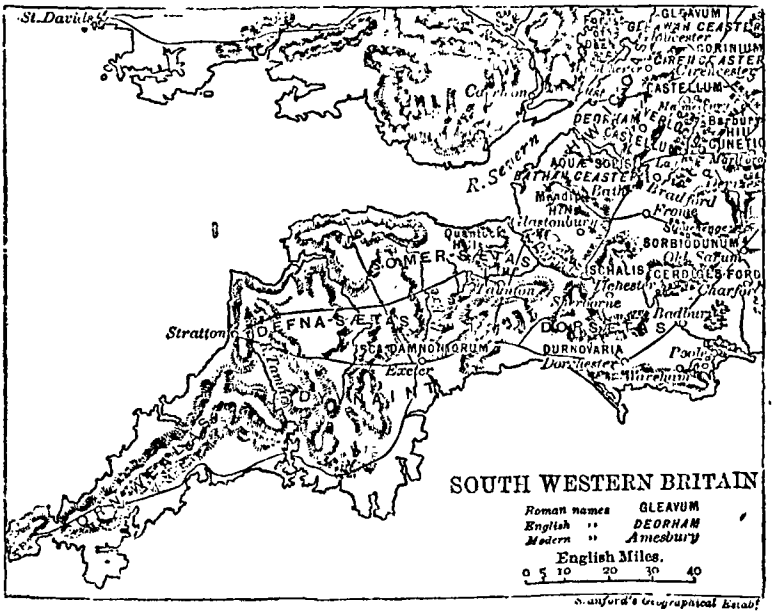
he was unable to meet the shock of Ine's attack, and a hard-fought battle gave the West-Saxons a fertile territory along the Tone with the districts of Crewkerne and Ilminster. On the border of the newly-won territory, where a spur of the Black-downs runs out towards the ridge of the Quantocks, the great flat of which this part of Somersetshire consists



narrows into a mere neck of land; and in the midst of this neck, on the banks of a little stream which wandered through it to the marshes of the Parrett, Ine set up a fortress that served as an admirable military position for the defence of his newly-conquered territory, or as a starting-point for a new advance on Dyvnaint. The fortress grew into a town,

and our Taunton, or Town on the Tone, still, even as a linguistic border-land, preserves the memory of this advance of Ine.[1]

The tract of country, which had passed, with the successive conquests of Cenwealh, Centwine, and Ine, into the hands of the West-Saxons, is that which took the name of the land of the Somersætas, or our Somerset. Few districts better illustrate the physical and social revolution which was wrought by the English conquerors. Under the Romans it had shared in the wealth and prosperity which characterized the country north of the Avon. One of its towns, Bath, stood on an equal footing with Glevum and Corinium in the strife with the invaders; and the district around its second town, Ilchester, was thickly studded with the villas of rich provincials, whose wealth was probably derived from the lead mines which had been worked even in British days along the crest of Mendip. In the chaos of native rule this wealth and order had long passed away; but the raids of the West-Saxons must have completed its ruin. The towns were left desolate as elsewhere. Bath, indeed, which had fallen into English hands as early as Ceawlin's day and was now detached from this region as a part of Mercia, already saw a new life rising up round the monastery which had been founded among its ruins; but the peasant long told amidst the wreck

[1] Eng. Chron. a. 722. "Tanton that Ine formerly built." Mr. Elworthy, in his Introduction to the "Dialect of West Somerset," says: "The people of the little village of Ruishton, only a mile and a half to the east of Taunton, speak the eastern dialect; while at Bishop's Hull, one mile to the west, they speak the western."

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of Ilchester a legend of its fall. Bristol was not as yet, and only villages and hamlets broke the space between Bath and Exeter; while the country houses of the provincial landowners lay burned or in ruin, and the mines from which their wealth had been drawn were abandoned or forgotten. Above all, the industrial works which the Romans had constructed for the drainage of the marshes that stretched into the very heart of the country fell unheeded into decay; the sea burst again through the neglected barriers at the mouth of the Parrett and the Brue; and the height which is known as the Tor rose like an island out of a waste of flood-drowned fen that stretched westward to the Channel.

Ine's rule.

From one of the English families who chose it as their settlement a little hamlet at the base of the Tor took its name of Glastonbury, the burh of the Glæstings.[1] The spot, however, was already famous as a religious shrine of the Britons. It had long been a place of pilgrimage, for the tradition that a second Patrick rested there drew to it the wandering scholars of Ireland;[2] and the new relation of Englishmen and Welshmen was shown in the reverence which Ine paid to this British shrine. The monastery became an English one, richly endowed by the King[3]; and beside its "ancient church, built by no art of man," a rude log-building left by its Welsh owners, and

[1] Kemble, Sax. in Engl. i. 465.

[2] "Anon. Life of Dunstan." Stubbs's Memorials of Dunstan, p. 10.

[3] For his grants see Stubbs and Haddan, Councils, vol. iii. p. 306.

carefully preserved by the English comers, Ine founded his own abbey-church of stone.[1] The same mingling of the two races is seen in another conquest of this time. Side by side with their progress across Somersetshire, the West-Saxons must have been pushing their way through the woodlands of Dorset; and even before Ine's conquests reached the Tone, an advance in this quarter from the south seems to have given them Exeter. By an arrangement which marks the new temper of the conquerors, Exeter became a double city.[2] Its southern half was henceforth English; its northern—as is still marked by the Celtic names of the saints to whom its churches in this quarter are dedicated—remained in the hands of the Britons. The laws of Ine[3] which still remain to us show him as providing for the administrative needs of the mixed population which dwelt in the district that had been added to the West-Saxon realm; and it was perhaps the same mixed character of its inhabitants which induced him to carry out Theodore's scheme of division in his own kingdom,[4] and while leaving Daniel at Winchester as bishop of the older Wessex, that is to say, our Hampshire, Berkshire, Surrey, and the bulk of Wiltshire, to group the whole country west of

[1] For the successive churches of Glastonbury see Freeman, "Ine," part ii. Somerset. Archæol. Proceed. vol. xx.

[2] Kerslake, paper on "Exeter" (Archæol. Journal, vol. xxx. p. 214 *et. seq.*). Will. Malm. Gest. Reg. vol. i. p. 214, says of Æthelstan, "Illos (Cornewallenses) quoque impigre adorsus, ab Excestrâ quam ad id temporis æquo cum Anglis jure inhabitarant, cedere compulit."

[3] Thorpe, "Anc. Laws and Institutes," vol. i. pp. 119, 123, 139.

[4] Bæda, H. E. v. 18.

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Selwood and the Frome valley as a new bishopric for his kinsman Ealdhelm.[1]

From this organization of his British conquests, however, Ine was called away by an attack on his northern frontier. Mercia had never forgiven the loss of her dominion across the Thames, and the new strength which Wessex drew from her conquests in Somerset would only spur the Midland Kingdom to a decisive struggle for the supremacy of the South. In 715 Ceolred, the son of Æthelred, who six years before had succeeded Coenred on the Mercian throne, again took up the strife. He must have marched into the very heart of Wessex,[2] for Ine met the foe at Wanborough, on the chalk-heights above the Vale of White Horse, where his ancestor Ceawlin had suffered his crowning defeat a century before. The battle was a long and bloody one; but the absence of all account of its issue shows that Ceolred's attack failed, and that the hope of subjecting the West-Saxons to a Mercian sway was for the while at an end. The victory of Ine indeed seemed to raise Wessex again to a front rank among the powers of Britain. But in the hour of his glory the king

[1] It was in this way that the diocese of Ealdhelm came to include that portion of the present Wiltshire about Malmesbury and Bradford which represents the forest tract which Cenwealh had won, as well as Dorset and Somersetshire. Although the West-Saxon shires are of older formation than those of middle England, and no doubt mainly represent the tribal settlements of distinct West-Saxon peoples, yet I think this diocesan division shows that the formation of Wiltshire with its actual boundaries is later in date than this division of the dioceses at the beginning of the eighth century.

[2] Engl. Chron. a. 715.

had again to face the civil strife which was the curse of Wessex; for after thirty-three years of a glorious reign the old anarchy broke out in revolts of Æthelings sprung like himself from the blood of Cerdic but sprung from the rival line of Ceol. Ine indeed held his own. One rebel, Cynewulf, was slain; another, Ealdberht, was driven to take refuge among the South-Saxons.[1] But the strife went on; and a wild legend tells the story of the disgust which at last drove Ine from the throne. He had feasted royally at one of his country houses, and as he rode from it on the morrow his queen bade him turn back thither. The King returned to find his house stripped of curtains and vessels, and foul with refuse and the dung of cattle, while in the royal bed where he had slept with Æthelburh rested a sow with her farrow of pigs. The scene had no need of the Queen's comment:—"See, my lord, how the fashion of this world passeth away!"[2] In 726 Ine laid down his troubled crown, and like his predecessor Ceadwalla sought peace and death in a pilgrimage to Rome.[3]

Æthelbald of Mercia.

The withdrawal of Ine and the anarchy of Wessex roused anew the hopes of its rival in Mid-Britain. In 718, a year after his defeat by Ine at Wanborough, the Mercian ruler Ceolred fell frenzy-smitten at his board,[4] and his realm passed into the hands of the most vigorous of its kings. Among

[1] Eng. Chron. a. 721, 725.

[2] Malm. Gest. Reg. (Hardy) vol. i. p. 49.

[3] Bæda, H. E., lib. v. c. 7.

[4] Eng. Chron. a. 716. Letter of Boniface to Æthelbald. Stubbs and Haddan, Councils, iii. 355.

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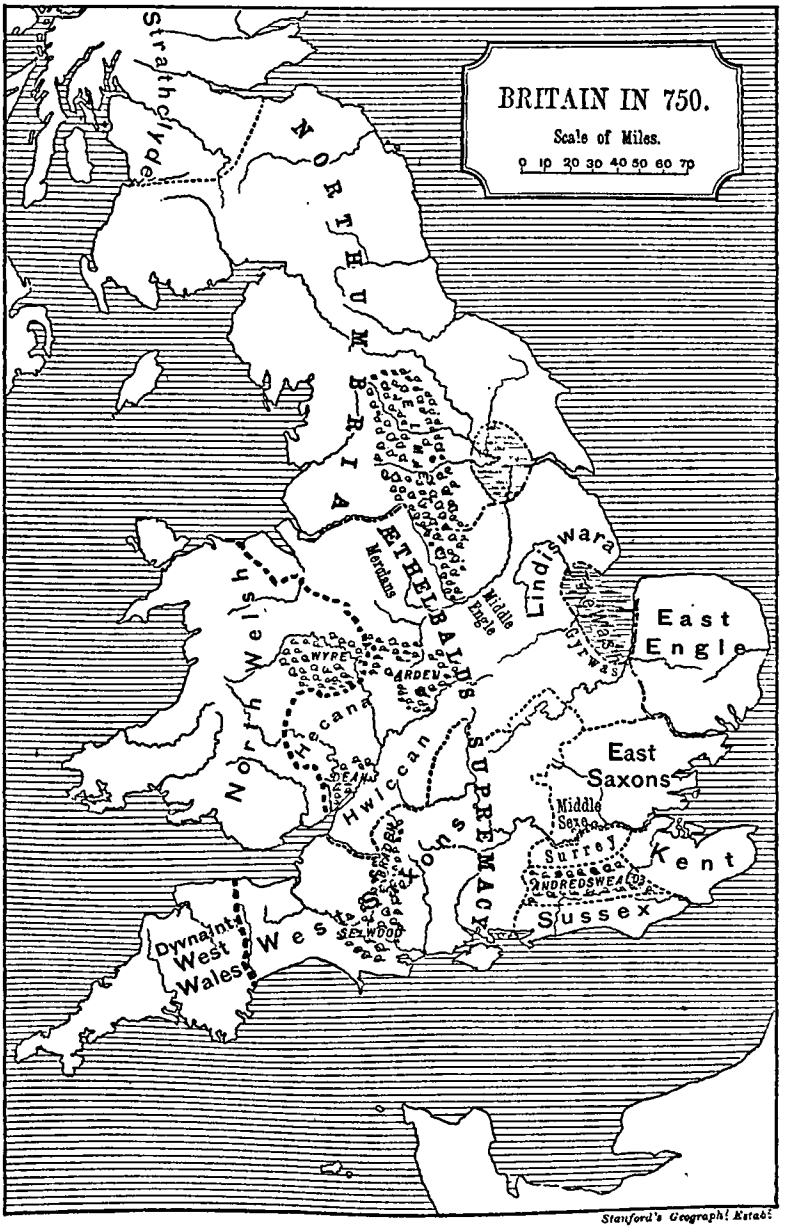
those who sought Guthlac's retirement at Crowland was Æthelbald, a son of Penda's brother Alweo, flying from Ceolred's hate. Driven off again and again by the King's pursuit, Æthelbald still returned to the little hut he had built beside the hermitage, and comforted himself in hours of despair with his companion's words. "Know how to wait," said Guthlac, "and the kingdom will come to thee; not by violence or rapine, but by the hand of God." On Ceolred's death indeed his people chose Æthelbald, who was already famous for his great strength and bravery, for their king.[1] Æthelbald took up again with better fortunes the enterprise in which his predecessor had been foiled—his struggle for the supremacy of the south. During the first ten years of his reign indeed he shrank from a conflict with the victor of Wanborough; but in the anarchy that broke out on Ine's withdrawal[2] Wessex lay helpless before him; and in the struggle that followed Æthelbald overran the whole of the West-Saxon country, till his siege and capture of the royal town of Somerton in 733 seemed to end the war.[3] For twenty years the overlordship of Mercia was recognized by all Britain south of the Humber. It was at the head of the forces, not of Mercia only, but of East-Anglia and Kent, as well as of the West-Saxons,[4] that Æthelbald marched against the Welsh on his western frontier; and he styled himself "King not of

[1] Malmesb. Gest. Reg. (Hardy), i. 111; Eng. Chron. a. 716.
[2] Eng. Chron. a. 728.
[3] Engl. Chron. a. 733.
[4] Huntingdon, Hist. Angl. (Arnold), pp. 119, 121.



Stanford's Geograph! Estab!

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the Mercians only, but of all the neighbouring peoples who are called by the common name of Southern English."[1] He had indeed to meet constant outbreaks of revolt among his new subjects. But for twelve years he seems to have met them with success; and it was not till 754 that a general rising forced him to call his whole strength to the field. At the head of his own Mercians and of the subject hosts of Kent, Essex, and East Anglia, Æthelbald marched to the field of Burford, where the West-Saxons were again marshalled under the golden dragon of their race. But the numbers of his host could not avert his doom. After hours of desperate fighting in the forefront of the battle, a sudden panic seized the Mercian king, and the supremacy of Mid-Britain passed for ever away, as he fled first of his army from the field.[2]

Northumbria at peace.

While the two powers of Southern Britain were wasting their energies in this desperate struggle, Northumbria remained apart in a peace which was only broken by occasional troubles on her northern border and by the beginnings of that anarchy which at a later time was to wreck her greatness. The fall of Ecgfrith in 685 had shaken indeed the fabric of the realm; for the triumphant Picts pressed in upon it from the north, and drove Bishop Trumwine

[1] Charter in Palgrave, "English Commonwealth," vol. ii. p. 218.

[2] Engl. Chron. a. 752. (From the death of Bæda, in 735, to the reign of Æthelwulf the entries of the English Chronicle are wrong by two years. See Stubbs' edition of Hoveden, preface to Vol. I. p. lxxxix. *et seq.*) Huntingdon, Hist. Ang. (Arnold), p. 121.

from Abercorn,[1] while their success woke the Britons to fresh revolt. Aldfrith, however, a brother of Ecgfrith, who was called from a refuge at Hii to the Northumbrian throne,[2] showed himself in this hour of need worthy of the blood from which he sprang by reasserting his mastery over the men of Cumbria and Galloway, and exchanging the claim of lordship over the Picts for a profitable alliance with them. Even in the north, however, his work was limited within the bounds of self-defence; and a consciousness of weakness is seen in the change which passes over the policy of his realm. All effort at conquest was for a while abandoned; and the state which had won England by its sword from heathendom, and given her by its victories the first notion of a national unity, turned to bestow on her the more peaceful gifts of art, letters, and a new poetry. The twenty years of Aldfrith's rule were years of peace and order, in which the literary and artistic impulse which had been given to Northumbria alike by the Celtic and Roman churches produced striking results. Letters above all sprang vigorously to the front. The books which Benedict brought from Rome in visit after visit[3] quickened the intellectual temper of the country; and it is not too much to say that under Aldfrith, himself a man of learning and study,[4] Northumbria became the literary centre of Western Europe.

[1] Bæda, H. E. lib. iv. c. 26.

[2] Bæda, H. E. lib. iv. c. 26; Life of Cuthbert, c. xxiv.

[3] Bæda, Vit. Abbat. (ed. Hussey), pp. 320, 323.

[4] See his purchase of a Cosmography from Abbot Ceolfrid. Bæda, Vit. Abbat. (ed. Hussey), p. 327.

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The first form the new learning took was naturally a biographical one; at the close of Aldfrith's reign, indeed, a school of biography was already in full vigour, remnants of whose work remain to us in the anonymous "Life of Cuthbert" and in the "Life of Wilfrid," by Æddi.[1] But this biographical out-pouring soon lost itself in a larger literary current, and through the troubled reigns of Aldfrith's three successors, Osred, Coenred, and Osric,[2] as well as the more peaceful reign of their successor, the scholarly Ceolwulf, the learning of the age seemed to be summed up in a Northumbrian scholar.

Bæda.

Bæda—the Venerable Bede, as later times styled him—was born in 673, nine years after the Synod of Whitby, on ground which passed a year later to Benedict Biscop as the site of the great abbey which he reared by the mouth of the Wear.[3] His youth was trained and his long tranquil life was wholly spent at Jarrow, in an offshoot of Benedict's house which was founded by his friend Ceolfrid. Bæda tells us in his own charming way a story of his boyhood there; how one of the great plagues which followed the Synod of Whitby swept off every monk who knew how to sing in choir save the abbot and this little scholar of his; and how the two stoutly kept up the service, and dropping only the antiphons, struggled through the psalms

[1] The "Life of Cuthbert" was the earlier of the two works; that of Wilfrid may be dated about 709.

[2] Osred, who was a mere boy, reigned eleven years, from 705—716; Coenred two years, 716—718; Osric eleven, from 718—729; Ceolwulf eight years, from 729—737.

[3] Bæda, H. E. v. 24; Vit. Abbat. (Hussey's Bæda), p. 318.

amidst much weeping and sobbing till the rest of the brethren were sufficiently instructed in the church-chant to suffer the full service to be restored.[1] Bæda never stirred from Jarrow. "I spent my whole life in the same monastery," he says, "and while attentive to the rule of my order and the service of the Church my constant pleasure lay in learning, or teaching, or writing."[2] The words sketch for us a scholar's life, the more touching in its simplicity that it is the life of the first great English scholar. The quiet grandeur of a life consecrated to knowledge, the tranquil pleasure that lies in learning and teaching and writing dawned in fact for Englishmen in the story of Bæda. While still young he became teacher; and six hundred monks, besides strangers that flocked thither for instruction, formed his school of Jarrow.[3] It is hard to imagine how, among the toils of the schoolmaster and the duties of the monk, Bæda could have found time for the composition of the numerous works that made his name famous in the West. But materials for study had accumulated in Northumbria through the journeys of Wilfrid and Benedict Biscop and the libraries which were forming at Wearmouth and York. The tradition of the older Irish teachers still lingered to direct the young scholar into that path of Scriptural interpretation to which he chiefly owed his fame. Greek, a rare accomplishment in the West, came to him from the school which the Greek Archbishop Theodore founded beneath the walls of Canterbury;

[1] Anon. Hist. Abbat. in Opera Minora Bædæ (Stevenson), sec. 14.

[2] Bæda, H. E. lib. v. c. 24. [3] Bæda, Vit. Abbat, 328.

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while his skill in the ecclesiastical chant was derived from a Roman cantor whom Pope Vitalian sent in the train of Benedict Biscop. Little by little the young scholar made himself master of the whole range of the science of his time: he became, as Burke rightly styled him, "the father of English learning."[1] The tradition of the older classic culture was revived for England in his quotations of Plato and Aristotle, of Seneca and Cicero, of Lucretius and Ovid. Virgil cast over him the spell that he cast over Dante; verses from the Æneid break his narratives of martyrdoms, and the disciple ventures on the track of the great master in a little eclogue descriptive of the approach of spring.

His work.

His work was done with small aid from others. "I am my own secretary," he writes. "I make my own notes. I am my own librarian." But forty-five works remained after his death to attest his prodigious industry. In his own eyes and those of his contemporaries the most important among these were the commentaries and homilies upon various books of the Bible which he had drawn from the writings of the Fathers. But he was far

[1] As a writer among Englishmen Bæda had been preceded by Aldhelm, who died in 709, as well as by the anonymous biographer of Cuthbert (between 697 and 705). Æddi, in his biography of Wilfrid (finished about 709), is his contemporary; for Bæda's earliest works seem to date from the beginning of the eighth century (see article "Bæda," by Stubbs, Dict. Christ. Biog. i. 300). The "De Sex Ætatibus" was written in 707. His other Scriptural, chronological, and biographical works preceded the Ecclesiastical History, which was ended in 731.

from confining himself to theology. In treatises compiled as text-books for his scholars Bæda threw together all that the world had then accumulated in astronomy and meteorology, in physics and music, in philosophy, grammar, rhetoric, arithmetic, medicine. But the encyclopædic character of his researches left him in heart a simple Englishman. He loved his own English tongue; he was skilled in English song; his last work was a translation into English of the Gospel of St. John, and almost the last words that broke from his lips were some English rimes upon death. But the noblest proof of his love of English lies in the work which immortalizes his name. In his "Ecclesiastical History of the English Nation," which he began just before the death of Aldfrith, in 704, Bæda became the first English historian. His work stretches over nearly a century and a half, from the landing of Augustine in 597 to the year 731 in which the old man laid down his pen. A prefatory opening, compiled from older writers, from legends and martyrologies, sums up the story of Britain under the Romans and its conquest by the English; but it is with the landing of the Roman missionaries that the work really begins. There is little need for Bæda's modest excuse. "If in what I have written any one find matters other than what is true, let him not blame me for cleaving to what is the true rule of historic narrative and simply gathering from common fame the facts I have resolved to record for the instruction of after-times."[1] What

[1] Preface to his "Ecclesiastical History."

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is really marvellous is the pains which he took in collecting and sifting his information. Where he found friends as zealous as Albinus and Nothelm at Canterbury his story is accurate and full. Even the Papal archives gave up the letters of Archbishops Laurentius and Honorius to his indefatigable research. His work was indeed limited by the difficulty of procuring information in the ruder states. The history of Northumbria, which lay within his own sphere of observation, is told with admirable fulness and force. Wessex, Mercia, and East Anglia fare worse, in spite of the information which reached Bæda from Bishop Daniel of Winchester and the monks of Lastingham; but fortunately they formed during most of this period the least important part of the historic field. The conversion of Kent, the warfare of Penda, the fight of Northumbria for the Cross, the preaching of Aidan, the wanderings of Cuthbert and Chad—these were the main events which Bæda had to follow, and on all these he is graphic and full.

His death.

What Bæda owed to no informant was his own exquisite faculty of story-telling. His story of Gregory in the market-place remains as familiar as a household word to English children. The quaint anecdotes of Cuthbert, the tender details of the love that knit Bishop Aidan to King Oswiu, are as charmingly told as the story of the Sparrow which marks the conversion of Northumbria. But no story even of Bæda's telling is so touching as the story of his death.[1] Two weeks before the Easter of 735 the old

[1] Given by a certain Cuthbert in a letter to Cuthwine; Sim. Durh. Hist. Dun. Ecc. (Twysden), i. c. 15.

man was seized with an extreme weakness and loss of breath. He still preserved, however, his usual pleasantness and good humour, and in spite of prolonged sleeplessness continued his lectures to the pupils about him. Verses of his own English tongue broke from time to time from the master's lip—rude rimes that told how before the "need-fare," Death's stern "must go," none can enough bethink him what is to be his doom for good or ill. The tears of Bæda's scholars mingled with his song. "We never read without weeping," writes one of them. So the days rolled on to Ascension-tide, and still master and pupils toiled at their work, for Bæda longed to bring to an end his version of St. John's Gospel into the English tongue and his extracts from Bishop Isidore. "I don't want my boys to read a lie," he answered those who would have had him rest, "or to work to no purpose after I am gone." A few days before Ascension-tide his sickness grew upon him, but he spent the whole day in teaching, only saying cheerfully to his scholars, "Learn with what speed you may; I know not how long I may last." The dawn broke on another sleepless night, and again the old man called his scholars round him and bade them write. "There is still a chapter wanting," said the scribe, as the morning drew on, "and it is hard for thee to question thyself any longer." "It is easily done," said Bæda; "take thy pen and write quickly." Amid tears and farewells the day wore on to eventide. "There is yet one sentence unwritten, dear master," said the boy. "Write it quickly," bade the dying man. "It is finished

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now," said the little scribe at last. "You speak truth," said the master; "all is finished now." Placed upon the pavement, his head supported in his scholars' arms, his face turned to the spot where he was wont to pray, Bæda chanted the solemn "Glory to God." As his voice reached the close of his song he passed quietly away.

The sons of Eata.

First among English scholars, first among English theologians, first among English historians, it is in the monk of Jarrow that English learning strikes its roots. But the quiet tenour of his life was broken by the signs of coming disorganization in Northumbria: and though this anarchy was quelled by the scholarly Ceolwulf, to whom Bæda dedicated his history, after eight years of rule this king laid down his sword in disgust,[1] and withdrew to a monastery. His reign however had been marked by an ecclesiastical change which shows how strongly the provincial feeling of severance in the three kingdoms was struggling against the centralizing action of the church. At the close of his life the state of things which he saw about him drew from Bæda a scheme of religious reformation, one of whose chief features was the revival of the Archbishoprick which Pope Gregory had originally designed to set up in the north;[2] and this suggestion was soon realized by the occupant of the see of York, Ecgberht, who procured from Rome his recognition as Archbishop in 735.[3] From this time, therefore, so far as Northumbria was concerned,

[1] Sim. Durh. Hist. Dun. Ecc. lib. ii. c. 1; Twysden.

[2] Epist. ad Ecgbertum, in Hussey's Bæda, p. 332.

[3] Appendix Bædæ, a. 735, in Hussey's Bæda, p. 314.

the work of Theodore was to a great extent undone; the supremacy of the see of Canterbury found a rival across the Humber; and the political isolation of the northern kingdom was reflected in its religious independence. The close connection of the new see and the northern throne was seen three years later, in 738, when the Archbishop's brother, Eadberht, became king of the Northumbrians. The joint character of their rule was shown in the "stycas" or copper pieces which were coined in the mint at York, and which bear the legend of the king on one side and of the primate on the other.[1]

Eadberht and Ecgberht.

Never had the kingdom shown greater vigour within or without than under these two sons of Eata. Eadberht showed himself from the outset of his reign an active and successful warrior. Though attacked at the same time on his southern border by Æthelbald of Mercia, he carried on in 740 a successful war against the Picts;[2] and ten years later recovered from the Britons of Strath-Clyde the district of Kyle in Ayrshire.[3] So great was his renown that the Frank King Pippin sent envoys to Northumbria with costly gifts and offers of his friendship.[4] Meanwhile Archbishop Ecgberht had shown as restless an activity in the establishment of a school at York. We have already seen the return of life to this city in the reign of Eadwine, and though it seems to have been again forsaken by the kings of Bernician race who

[1] Article by Raine on "Ecgberht," Dict. Christ. Biog. ii. 50.
[2] Appendix Bædæ, a. 740, Hussey's Bæda, p. 314.
[3] Ibid. a. 750.
[4] Sim. Durh. Hist. Dun. Ecc. lib. ii. c. 3; Twysden, p. 11.

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followed him, it became from Wilfrid's days the religious centre of the North, while under Eadberht, if not before, it had become its political centre.[1] The whole of its northern quarter and much of its eastern had been given up to the bishop and his clergy by Eadwine, doubtless because in its then state of abandonment it was a part of the folk-land, and remained open to give; and in the heart of it the king had reared a little wooden chapel for Paulinus and begun a larger church of stone.[2] But his fall stopped the progress of this building, and Wilfrid in 670 found the church almost in ruins, its windows covered with mere trellis-work, and its roof rotted with the rain.[3] The bishop's energy however soon made this church a rival even of his buildings in Ripon and Hexham, and its

[1] How completely even the main lines of communication which ran through the older town were blotted out by the time of the English settlement, we may see from comparing a ground-plan of the early English streets with those of their Roman predecessors. (For early York, see a map in Mr. Freeman's "Norman Conquest," vol. iv. p. 202.) We see from this that the road from Aldborough to the south, if it still crossed the English city in the line of the Roman Way, diverged widely from this line to cross the Fosse; while the road to Malton, which crossed the former at right angles in the heart of Eboracum, ceased to exist in the English York, save in a fragment called Stone-gate. Indeed the Minster with its buildings lay right across what had been the line of it. The bridge by which it crossed the Ouse, and the gate by which it left the town equally disappeared. The name of Stone-gate or street, which marks a part of this line where the modern highway coincided with the line of the old Roman road, would of itself suggest that elsewhere the new lines of occupation lay, not along the paved causeways of old Eboracum, but along unpaved lanes which wandered over its site.

[2] Bæda, H. E. lib. ii. 14.

[3] Ældi, c. 16.

enlargement and decoration were actively carried on by Ecgberht, by whose days York had become the settled capital of the kingdom. Ecgberht not only established a school in connection with his church, but supplied its educational needs by gathering the largest library which had yet been seen in Britain, a library in which Pliny and some at least of the works of Aristotle, the orations of Cicero and the poems of Virgil, Statius, and Lucan, might be seen side by side with grammarians and scholiasts, and in which the works of two Englishmen at least, Ealdhelm and Bæda, mingled themselves with the long roll of Greek and Latin Fathers.[1]

[1] The list which Alcuin gives us in his poem "De Pontificibus" (Raine's "Historians of Church of York," p. 395), is of singular interest as the first catalogue which we have of any English library:—

"Illic invenies veterum vestigia patrum,
Quidquid habet pro se Latio Romanus in orbe,
Græcia vel quidquid transmisit clara Latinis,
Hebraicus vel quod populus bibit imbre superno,
Africa sucifluo vel quidquid lumine sparsit.
Quod pater Hieronymus, quod sensit Hilarius, atque
Ambrosius præsul, simul Augustinus, et ipse
Sanctus Athanasius, quod Orosius edit avitus:
Quidquid Gregorius summus docet, et Leo papa;
Basilius quidquid, Fulgentius atque, coruscant,
Cassiodorus item, Chrysostomus atque Johannes.
Quidquid et Athelmus docuit, quid Beda magister,
Quæ Victorinus scripsere Boetius atque
Historici veteres, Pompeius, Plinius, ipse
Acer Aristoteles, rhetor quoque Tullius ingens,
Quid quoque Sedulius, vel quid canit ipse Juvencus,
Alcimus et Clemens, Prosper, Paulinus, orator,
Quid Fortunatus, vel quid Lactantius edunt.

The fall of Northumbria.

Ecgberht was himself the leading teacher in his school, instructing its clerks or discussing literary questions with them; and the efficiency of his teaching is shown by such a scholar as Alcuin. Scholars indeed flocked to him from every country: for it was at a moment when learning seemed to be flickering out both in Ireland and among the Franks that the School of York gathered to itself the intellectual impulse which had been given to Northumbria by Bæda, and preserved that tradition of learning and culture which was to spread again, through Alcuin, over the nations of the west. The school, indeed, long survived its founder, for the glory of the sons of Eata proved but brief. In 756 Eadberht continued his attacks on Strath-Clyde; and allying himself with the Picts, made himself master even of its capital, Alcluyd, or Dumbarton. But at the moment when his triumph seemed complete, his army was utterly destroyed[1] as it withdrew homewards, only a few days after the city's surrender; and so crushing was this calamity, that two years after it not only did Eadberht withdraw to a monastery and leave the throne to his son Osulf,[2] but the Archbishop

Quæ Maro Virgilius, Statius, Lucanus et auctor;
Artis grammaticæ vel quid scripsere magistri,
Quid Probus atque Focas, Donatus, Priscianusve,
Servius, Euticius, Pompeius, Comminianus.
Invenies alias perplures, lector, ibidem.
Egregios studiis, arte et sermone magistros,
Plurima qui claro scripsere volumina sensu;
Nomina sed quorum præsenti in carmine scribi
Longius est visum, quam plectri postulet usus."

[1] Sim. Dunelm. Gest. Reg. a. 756; Twysden, p. 106.

[2] Sim. Dunelm. Hist. Dun. Ecc. lib. ii. c. 3.

joined his brother in retirement, till both were laid side by side in the minster at York.[1] With the death of the two sons of Eata the peace of the kingdom disappeared. Men of unknown lineage disputed the throne with kings of the royal stock; revolts of the nobles added to the general disorder; and the fierce blood-shedding which characterised the successive strifes for the crown showed the moral deterioration of the country. Isolated as Northumbria had become, its isolation became even more pronounced in these fifty years of anarchy; for even the intermarriages of its kings with the other kingly houses all but ceased, and the northern realm hardly seemed to form part of the English people.

England and the Continent

In spite however of this anarchy, Northumbria remained to the last the chief seat of English religion and English learning. In the midst of its political disorder learning and the love of books still flourished at Jarrow and York, and at the close of the century a Northumbrian scholar was the centre of the literary revival at the court of the Franks. It is the correspondence of this scholar, Alcuin, which first reveals to us a change that was at this moment passing over our history. Till now the fortunes of the English people had lain wholly within the bounds of the Britain they had won. With what was left of the Roman Empire the new country held no relations whatever. With the kindred German peoples across the Channel its intercourse was scant and unimportant. But in the eighth century our national horizon suddenly widened, and the fortunes of England became linked

[1] Sim. Dunelm. Hist. Dun. Ecc. lib. ii. c. 3; Twysden, p. 16.

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to the general fortunes of Western Christendom. The change was brought about by the work of English missionaries in the mother-country of Englishmen. While Ælla and Cerdic were overrunning Britain, the mass of the tribes between Friesland and the Elbe remained in their old homeland, unchanged in religion or in institutions. Little or no intercourse seems to have gone on between these Saxons and their offshoot on British soil. But the tie of kinship had never been forgotten; and from the moment when a storm drove Bishop Wilfred in 677 [1] to the Frisian coast a new interest in the race from which their blood was drawn sprang up among Englishmen. Even in the dark hour of Nectansmere a Northumbrian scholar was calling for mission priests to labour "among the nations in Germany to whom the English or Saxons who now inhabit Britain are known to owe their blood and origin;" [2] but nothing had been actually done for their conversion when a way for mission-labour was opened by the sword of the Franks.

The Franks.

The Franks had long stood first in power among the German peoples who settled amidst the wreck of Rome. While Jute and Engle and Saxon were creeping slowly along the southern shores of Britain, their Frankish neighbours on the Lower Rhine had swept over Northern Gaul, over the southern kingdom of the Visigoths, and over the Burgundian realm in the valley of the Rhône. Nor were the Frank conquests limited to what had been Roman ground. Eastward

[1] Bæda, H. E. lib. v. c. 19.

[2] Bæda, H. E. lib. v. c. 9.

across the Rhine other German tribes, Alemannians, Thuringians, and Bavarians, became their tributaries; and at the time when Augustine traversed Frankland on his way to Kent their lordship stretched from the Pyrenees to the Scheldt and from the Bay of Biscay to the Inn. Even at this early time therefore no other Teutonic state could vie either in power or extent of rule with a realm which seemed already more than a match for what remained of the Empire of Rome. But it was long before the influence of the Franks told as it might have been expected to tell on the general politics of the West. The mass of tribes and principalities which owned their name or bowed beneath their sway was too loosely bound together to exercise any definite pressure on the world without them. For a while indeed their anarchy seemed to undo all that their early victories had done. In the midst of the seventh century their power over Germany had all but gone. Though their hold remained unshaken in the central districts between the Neckar and the Main, Bavarians and Swabians had alike thrown off their rule to the south, while northwards the Saxons pushed forward from the Weser to the Rhine, and the Frisians won the lands round the mouth of the Scheldt. But it was just at this moment of weakness that the anarchy of the realm came suddenly to an end and the Frankish states drew together into a power which overawed the world. In 687 a victory at Testri placed the Eastern Franks of the Rhine and the Meuse at the head of their race, and the rule of their older royal house, the Merwings, was practically set aside

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for that of the leader of these Eastern Franks, Pippin of Herstall.

England and the Franks.

The victory of Pippin changed at a blow the political aspect of Western Christendom. Primarily it was a rally of the Frank race against pressure from without; and the mass of warring tribes had no sooner drawn together than the recovery of Lower Friesland showed their resolve to build up again the supremacy over Germany which the Franks had in great measure lost. But Testri was destined to have far wider issues than the mere restoration of the realm of Chlodowig. It was the victory of Pippin which drew England into connexion with the fortunes of the Franks. A friendly intercourse seems to have gone on between the two peoples ever since their settlement on either side of the Channel. There is little indeed to indicate the existence of any early political relations between them, but the bond of a common religion drew the two countries more closely together. Kings of East-Anglia took refuge among the Franks from the sword of Penda.[1] Frankish missionaries, such as Agilberct, made their way into Britain. English children were sent to be trained in Frank monasteries, and the daughters of Kentish Kings became Frankish abbesses.[2] The passion for pilgrimages which arose at the close of the seventh century made English travellers familiar with the Frank kingdom as they passed through it on their way to Rome.[3] But it was not till the victory of

[1] Bæda, H. E. lib. iii. c. 18.

[2] Bæda, H. E. lib. iv. c. 23; ibid. H. E. lib. ii. c. 20.

[3] Charles to Offa. Stubbs and Haddan, Councils, iii. 496-7.

Testri that the connexion of England and the Franks became in any way a political connexion. Victorious over the Frieslanders of the Scheldt, the Frankish leader was anxious to complete his victory by their conversion, and the zeal of Englishmen to win their kindred to the faith supplied him with missionaries. If Pippin did not summon the Northumbrian Willibrord and his twelve fellow preachers to his court in 690, he at any rate assured them when they appeared there of his support and protection in their mission work along the northern sea.[1]

The English Missionaries.

Willibrord fixed his bishop's seat at Utrecht, and laboured for forty years among the stubborn Frieslanders, while the sword of Pippin and his son, Charles Martel, was slowly building up again the Empire of the Franks. But the work of Willibrord was eclipsed by that of the West-Saxon Winfrith or Boniface, who crossed to the Continent in the closing years of Ine's reign, or about 718.[2] Boniface, like his

[1] Bæda, H. E. lib. v. c. 10.

[2] The work of Boniface lies too far outside English bounds to make a part of our story. But in European history his part is a great one. His English name was Winfrith; he was born in the last quarter of the seventh century at Crediton, and brought up in a monastery in or near Exeter. He became monk at Nutsell or Netley by Winchester, a priest at thirty, and so famous for learning that he was deputed by Ine to attend a council convoked by Archbishop Berhtwald. He sailed soon after 716, with two or three monks, to Utrecht, found the Frisian King Radbod at war with Charles Martel, and looking on missionary work there as hopeless, returned home again, and with letters from Bishop Daniel visited Gregory II. at Rome, where the Pope gave him a commission to evangelize Central Europe. He returned by Lombardy, and crossing the Alps into the Duchy of Bavaria, proceeded thence to Thuringia, a country half-heathen, half-converted by

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predecessor, looked for support to the Frankish Kings. "Without your aid," he owned to Charles Martel, "I could neither control the people nor defend the

Scot missionaries. Here, however, in the midst of his labours of organization and discipline he heard of the death of Radbod (719); and he at once started for Friesland, where for three years he assisted Willibrord: then returning to Thuringia in the wake of Charles Martel's victorious troops, he conducted a mission among Hessian heathens between the Middle Rhine and the Elbe, till 723, when he again visited Rome and Gregory. He was now made "regionary bishop," assuming the name of Bonifacius, and was bound by a stringent oath of fealty to the Pope. Starting again with commendatory letters to Charles Martel, then in a fresh tide of conquests, he gained his support, and again attacked the Hessians and felled their sacred oak at Geismar. A constant correspondence with England drew to him monks, money, and books, in plenty; and in 731 a new Pope, Gregory III. made him Archbishop and "legate," so that he was enabled to correct refractory monks, and control chaos in Thuringia, as well as found missions and monasteries near Erfurt, Fritzlar, and Homburg in Hesse. In 738, with a great train of monks and converts, he visited Rome for the last time: returned through Bavaria, and organized the Church there by founding four sees in that Duchy. Still backed by Charles Martel's sons, especially Pippin, he wielded authority over Austrasia and Neustria, and rose into the greatest Church figure of the day. In 743 he became Archbishop of Mainz, with a diocese stretching from Cöln to Strassburg, and from Worms to Coire; and showed his activity by founding sees at Würzburg, Erfurt, Eichstadt, and in Hesse at Buraburg, while in 744 he founded the abbey of Fulda in the great forest between Hesse and Bavaria. In 751 Pippin was made king through his means, but Boniface, from his letters, seems not to have been present at the coronation. He was in fact withdrawing from active life; in 753 he named Lull his successor at Mainz; and now, "infirm and decrepit in body," set out for Frisia, and was martyred there June 4. For his life, besides the passages in Bæda, we have a biography by Willibrord, and his collected letters.

priests nor prevent pagan and idolatrous rites in Germany." And the Frank aid was ungrudgingly given; it was the threats of Charles which shielded the missionary as he levelled the heathen temples to the ground and hewed down the oak of Thunder in the sacred grove by Fritzlar. In this strange alliance of the Gospel and the sword the sword necessarily played the weightier part. Had the Germans indeed been willing to listen to mere preaching, the preaching of the English missionaries was hardly such as to win them to the faith of Christ. A Frisian King who paused on the brink of baptism to ask whither his fathers had gone who had died unchristened was told that they had gone to hell. "Whither they have gone will I go!" said Radbod, and turned back from the font. But preaching in any shape was wasted on men who saw in the missionaries only an advance guard of the Frank invaders and in the Gospel a badge of national slavery. The old religious tolerance of the German peoples disappeared. The new faith advanced and drew back with the victories or defeats of the Franks. Here and there the German axe avenged the wrongs of German freedom as of the German gods, and at the moment when his own Wessex was finally shaking off the Mercian supremacy, Boniface himself fell beneath the sword of heathen Frieslanders. By this time, however, the work of the missionaries was done. From the banks of the Danube to the mouth of the Rhine all Germany, save the stubborn Saxon land, bowed, if but in name, to the faith of Christ.

Results of their work.

But the conversion of Germany by the English missionaries was more than a victory for the Franks or

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for Christianity, it was a victory for Rome. England owed its faith to the Papacy, and it was to Rome that its missionaries looked as the religious centre of Christendom. If they drew their temporal power from the Frankish sword, they sought spiritual authority from the hands of the Roman Bishop. It was to Rome that Willibrord wandered for ordination as Bishop of the Frieslanders; it was from Rome that Boniface sought his commission to preach in central and southern Germany. In visit after visit to the shrine of the Apostles the missionaries bound the German Church firmly to the obedience of the see of St. Peter. Their action was a turning-point in the history of the Papacy; for it was to the immense accession of power which their work gave it that the spiritual monarchy of Rome over the West was mainly due. But it was a turning-point also in the history of the Franks. The submission to her spiritual sway of the peoples whom their sword had won first brought Rome and the Franks together, and the union of the two powers was soon drawn closer by mutual needs. Rome saw in the Franks the one state which could save her from the ambition of the Lombards and the pressure of the Eastern Emperor. The house of Pippin on the other hand saw in Rome the one source of religious authority which could give a sacred sanction to their rule; and in the years that followed Ine's withdrawal from the throne the alliance between the Franks and the Papacy took a formal shape. In 751 the voice of Rome pronounced that the honours of sovereignty over the Frankish peoples should fall to the actual

holder of power. The Merwing Hilderick was formally deposed, and Pippin the Short, the son of Charles Martel, was anointed King of the Franks with the assent of Boniface as legate of the Papal see. A few years later, Pippin repaid his debt to Rome by crossing the Alps and by delivering the Papacy from the pressure of the Lombards.

Mercia under Offa.

In bringing about this union between Rome and the Franks the English missionaries had given their after shape to the fortunes of modern Europe. The greatness of the Papacy in the middle ages sprang from the recognition of its authority by the German Church which Boniface and Willibrord built up. In saving Rome from the Lombards Pippin and his son Charles the Great brought about a revival of the Empire in the west. A common interest begat at a single moment the two mighty powers which were to part mediæval Christendom between them, and from whose strife was to spring the faiths and the nations of modern Europe. As yet, however, these mighty issues were unseen; and England knew only of the connexion between Pippin and the English preachers in the intercourse between Britain and the Frankish Court which this connexion brought about. Its fortunes indeed at this moment offered a strange contrast to those of the country across the Channel. While the Franks were drawing together into a vast and concentrated power, the work of national consolidation among the English seemed to be fatally arrested. The battle of Burford had finally settled the division of Britain into three equal powers. Wessex was now as firmly planted south of the

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Thames as Northumbria north of the Humber; and the Midland kingdom could henceforth hope for no extension beyond either of these rivers. At the moment indeed of its great defeat it could hardly hope to retain its supremacy even over this territory. Not only had Wessex been freed by the battle of Burford, but Æthelbald's own throne seems to have been shaken; for in 757 the Mercian king was surprised and slain in a night attack by his ealdormen,[1] and a year of confusion passed ere his kinsman Offa could avenge him on his murderers and succeed to the realm. But in the anarchy Mercia had shrunk into narrower bounds. Kent, Essex, and East-Anglia had thrown off her yoke, while the Welshmen were rallying to fresh inroads over her western border.

Wars with Kent and Wessex.

None of the Mercian losses had been so grievous as the loss of Kent. Through Kent ran the mainroad of communication with the Continent; it was from the ports of Kent that English merchants set sail across the Channel: and the Kentish port-dues formed a welcome addition to the Mercian revenue. Kent, too, was the seat of an archbishoprick whose obedience was owned by the whole English Church south of the Humber, and whose political weight was making itself more strongly felt every day. Yet years had to pass before Offa could set about the recovery of this province, and it was only after a struggle of three years that a victory at Otford[2] in 775 gave it back to the Mercian realm... With Kent the king doubtless again recovered Essex and London, within whose walls, in a quarter which was doubtless then still uninhabited,

[1] Appendix Bædæ, a. 757.

[2] Eng. Chron. a. 773 (5).

he built according to the tradition of the city a royal vill whose site is now marked by a church of St. Alban's. The re-conquest of these dependencies in the south-east may have spurred Offa to a fresh encounter with the West-Saxons, and four years later, in 779, he marched upon the fragment of their kingdom which remained to the north of the Thames, the district of the Four Towns, and of the modern shires of Oxford and Buckingham. The two armies met in a hard-fought encounter at Bensington,[1] and the capture of the town as well as the eventual possession of the disputed district show that the victory remained with Offa.

Conquests over the Welsh.

The success was a great one, for, as the locality of their battles shows, it was this district above all that had formed the subject of contention between Mercia and the West-Saxons; while its conquest gave the Midland kingdom a strong southern frontier in the course of the Thames. But how balanced was the struggle is clear from the fact that it brought Offa's efforts to build up again the supremacy of his predecessor to an end, and that for the nine years that followed Mercia made no further efforts to extend her power over her English neighbours. Like her rivals, she turned upon the Welsh.[2] Pushing after 779 over the Severn, whose upper course had served till now as the borderline between Briton and Englishman, Offa drove the

[1] Eng. Chron. a. 777 (9).

[2] Annales Cambriæ (Rolls edit.), a. 778-784. The story of the dyke is not found before Asser (Asser, ed. Wise, p. 10); and the dyke itself is certainly in parts a natural feature and not artificial. But the later tradition is probably right in taking it as a bound of their conquest.

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King of Powys from his capital, Pengwyrn, whose older name its conquerors replaced by the significant designation of the Town in the Scrub, Scrobsbyryg, or Shrewsbury, and carried the Mercian border to the Wye. The border-line he drew after his inroad is marked by a huge earth-work which runs from the mouth of the Wye to that of the Dee, and which still bears the name of Offa's Dyke. A settlement of Englishmen on the land between this dyke and the Severn served as a military frontier for the Mercian realm. Here, as in the later conquests of the Northumbrians and the West-Saxons, the older plan of clearing the conquered from the soil was abandoned. The Welshmen no longer withdrew from the land which the English won; they dwelt undisturbed among their conquerors; and it was probably to regulate the relations of the two races on the border he had won that Offa drew up the code which bore his name.[1]

Mercia and Wessex.

In the central, as in the northern realm, attacks on the Britons marked the close of all dreams of supremacy over the English themselves. Under Offa Mercia sank into virtual isolation. As we shall see, he cherished to the very close of his life the hope of restoring in its fulness the older realm of Central Britain by the recovery of East-Anglia; but he abstained from any effort to extend his supremacy over the two rival kingdoms. The anarchy into which Northumbria sank after Eadberht's death never tempted him to cross the Humber; nor was

[1] The code is lost, but is mentioned by Ælfred in his Laws. Thorpe, Anc. Laws and Institut. vol. i. p. 59.

he shaken from his inaction by as tempting an opportunity which presented itself across the Thames. Their new strength had not drawn the West-Saxons from their attitude of isolation; though they were ready to defend their independence against Mercian attack, their aggressive force, like that of Offa or Northumbria, was turned not against their fellow-Englishmen but against the Welsh. It must have been during the years which followed on the battle of Burford that they made themselves masters of that part of what remained of the shrunken kingdom of Dyvnaint which still retains its old name in the form of Devon, and pushed their frontier from the Exe and the Tone, where Ine had left it, as far westward as the Tamar. But in 786 their progress was stayed by a fresh outbreak of anarchy. Their king Cynewulf was slain by the brother of a king whom he had himself driven from the throne,[1] and the succession of his son Beorhtric was disputed by Ecgberht, a descendant like Ine of Ceawlin, and thus a representative of the rival line of the house of Cerdic. The strife ended in Ecgberht's defeat and in his flight to Offa's court; but the Mercian King used his presence not so much to further schemes of aggrandizement as to bring about a peaceful connexion with his turbulent neighbours, and three years later Beorhtric purchased Ecgberht's expulsion from Mercia by taking Offa's daughter, Eadburh, to wife.[2]

Archbishoprick of Lichfield.

At this moment indeed Offa was bent on a project which pointed to the purpose of making the threefold division of Britain a permanent basis of its political

[1] Eng. Chron. a. 784 (6). [2] Engl. Chron. a. 787 (9).

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order. This was the erection of a third archbishoprick. Theodore's design of gathering into one the whole English Church round the centre of Canterbury had already in part broken down; for when Northumbria abandoned the hope of a national supremacy and withdrew into provincial isolation, she raised the see of York into a new archbishoprick. Offa now followed its example. The mission of two Papal legates to Britain in 786 [1] was the result of urgent letters from the King; and in a synod held under their presidency in the following year Lichfield was raised into an archbishoprick with the Bishops of Mercia and East Anglia for its suffragans. [2] After-tradition was probably right in looking on this measure as intended mainly to lessen the power of Canterbury, where the primates were becoming a centre of Kentish resistance to the Mercian overlordship. Left with only four suffragans, the Bishops of Rochester and London, of Selsey and Winchester, [3] the see of Augustine must have sunk into the weakest and least important of the three primacies between which Britain was now divided. But both ecclesiastically and politically Offa's act pointed to far wider issues than this. It brought England into new and more direct relations with Rome. Roman legates were called to remould the fabric of the English Church, and the Papal sanction was met by a pledge on Offa's part that he and his

[1] Sim. Dunelm. de Gest. Reg. a. 786.

[2] Engl. Chron. a. 785 (really 787). Stubbs and Haddan, Councils, etc. vol. iii. 443 *et seq.* for documents of this mission, and valuable notes.

[3] Malm. Gest. Reg. (Hardy), i. 119.

successors would pay year by year a sum both for alms and lights to the see of St. Peter. Its political results promised to be even weightier. Had this threefold division remained stamped on the English Church, it would hardly have failed to strengthen the threefold division which seemed to be stamping itself on the English nation. The effect of its separate primacy in strengthening the isolation of the north was seen at a later day in the difficulty with which this part of England was brought into political union with the rest, whether by the sword of Eadred or of William the Norman. Had the Archbishoprick of Lichfield proved a more lasting one, it could hardly have been less effective in strengthening the isolation of Mid-Britain, and in throwing a fresh hindrance in the way of any fusion of Englishmen into a single people.

Charles the Great.

All Offa in fact aimed at was the union of Mid-Britain, of the land between Humber and Thames, with its Kentish outlet, under the Mercian crown; and even in this aim he was still foiled by the resistance of East-Anglia. Not only was he hampered in any larger projects of aggrandizement by the dread of the West-Saxons, but he was forced to watch jealously a power which had risen to a dangerous greatness over sea. The results of the action of Boniface and his fellow missionaries had been rapidly developing themselves through the reign of Offa, and the power of the Franks had now risen to a height which made them supreme in the Western world. After a short interval of divided sovereignty on the death of Pippin, his son Charles, so well known in

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after days as Charles the Great, won full possession of the Frankish throne. The policy of Charles towards the English kingdoms remained as friendly as that of his father. The political incidents of the new reign indeed made English friendship more needful than ever to the Franks, for the two peoples whose hostility threatened them with immediate war were both linked in different ways to Englishmen. In their German home the Lombards had been close neighbours of the conquerors of Britain, and the similarity of their dress, the identity of many of the Lombard and English names, as well as chance marriages of Lombard Kings with Englishwomen point to closer bonds between the peoples than those of mere neighbourhood. Nor had Englishmen forgotten that the Saxons of the Continent, with whom Charles was now about to open the most terrible contest of his reign, were the stock from which they sprang, though their zeal for the Christianization of their kindred was strong enough to overpower the more natural sympathy with them in their struggle for freedom against the sword of the Frank. But this common religious interest on the Saxon Shore was not the only bond which drew Frank and Englishman together. A common political interest revealed itself in their relations with the Celtic peoples on either side the Channel. Among the most harassing troubles of the Franks was the restless craving of the Bretons for freedom; and the struggle of the Bretons against the Franks found echoes in the struggle of their Welsh brethren in Britain against the English kingdoms. Offa was bridling the inroads

of the central Welshmen, Wessex was slowly pressing westward on those of Dyvnaint, at the moment when the bravest of the Frank warriors found endless work in stamping out again and again the unquenchable fire of revolt among the Celts of Britanny.

Charles and Offa.

The scanty details which we possess of intercourse between Charles and the English kingdoms point to a policy which would naturally be dictated by these common interests. His friendship with the Northumbrian scholar, Alcuin, who joined him in 782, naturally drew Charles into close relations with Northern Britain; but his missions and remonstrances in this quarter seem at first to have aimed simply at checking the anarchy of Northumbria. With Offa—if we judge from the fragments of their correspondence which remain, rather than from later traditions—the relations of Charles were equally friendly.[1] He may have striven to save Kent from his grasp, and threatening letters from the Frankish court may have met the Mercian on his march into the province.[2] But if so, Offa's disregard of them was followed by no act of more direct intervention. At the moment, indeed, of the reconquest of Kent the hands of Charles were tied by dangers nearer home. It was no time to provide a quarrel in his rear when he was marching

[1] In a letter written in 796, or at the close of Offa's life, Charles speaks of their "antiqui inter nos pacti," as well as of the constant correspondence between them, "epistolis, quæ diversis siquidem temporibus per missorum vestrorum manus delatæ sunt." Stubbs and Haddan, Councils, iii. 496.

[2] This is only mentioned by the supposititious "Vita Offæ."

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to his final struggle with the Lombards, and threatened with the opening of a struggle far sterner and more lasting with the Saxons of the Elbe. In the years which followed, indeed, the power of the Frankish king reached a height which made any hostility from England of less moment to him. While Offa was mastering Kent, Charles put an end to the monarchy of the Lombards, and added the bulk of Italy to the Frankish realm. While the Mercian king drove the Welsh from the Severn, Charles was driving the Saxons in thousands to baptism in the Lippe, and carrying his border over the Pyrenees to the Elbe. At the moment when Ecgberht made his way to the Frankish court, its king had become master of a realm which stretched from Britanny to the mountains of Bohemia, and from Zaragoza to the mouth of the Elbe. But immense as was his power, Charles was still careful to keep up good relations with the English kingdom, and the care with which at this time he informed Offa of the progress of Christianity among the old Saxons proves that he looked upon him as a useful ally.

Relations of Charles with England.

But friendly as was the general tenor of the King's policy, Offa shrank cautiously from any connexion which might imply a recognition of Frankish supremacy. When Charles in 788 demanded the hand of one of the Mercian king's daughters for his son Charles, Offa demanded in return the hand of a daughter of Charles for his son Ecgberht; and so stung was Charles by this claim of equality that he closed for a while his ports against English traffic till the mediation of Alcuin reconciled the two

sovereigns.[1] But Offa had good grounds for his caution. The costly gifts which Charles despatched from time to time to the monasteries of England as of Ireland showed his will to obtain an influence in both countries: through Alcwinè he maintained relations with Northumbria: through Archbishop Æthelheard he maintained relations not only with Kent but with the whole English Church. Above all he harboured at his court exiles from every English realm. Exiled kings of Northumbria made their way to Aachen or Nimeguen; East Anglian thegns sought a refuge there after the conquest of their realm;[2] and at the close of Offa's life in 796 Charles was still sheltering a priest, Odberht, who had left England on pretext of pilgrimage, but, as the Mercian king believed, to make false charges against him, as well as other exiles, "who through fear of death have fled to our protection."[3] There too Ecgberht, the claimant of the West-Saxon throne, had found a refuge since Offa's league with Beorhtric in 787.

Ecgberht at the Frankish Court.

The years which Ecgberht spent at the court of Charles were years of the highest moment in the history of the world. Master of the whole German people across the Channel, the Frankish King threw the weight of his new power on the Sclavonic and Tartar nations which were pressing on its rear; and that eastward movement of the Teutonic race, which was to

[1] See an examination of this story in Lappenberg, Ang. Sax. i. 293.

[2] Charles to Archbishop Æthelheard. Stubbs and Haddan, Councils, iii. 487, with note.

[3] Charles to Offa, Stubbs and Haddan, iii. 497.

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found the two great German powers of the present day in the marches of Brandenburg and Austria, began in the campaigns of Charles against the Avars and the Wends. But Charles was now to be more than a German king. His greatness had reached a height which revived in men's minds the memory of Rome: his repulse of the heathen world, which was pressing on from the east, marked him out for the head and champion of Christendom; and on Christmas Day, 800, the shouts of the people and priesthood of Rome hailed him as Roman Emperor. Ecgberht had probably marched in the train of the Frankish king to the Danube and the Tiber; he may have witnessed the great event which changed the face of the world; and it was in the midst of the peace which followed it, while the new Emperor was yet nursing hopes of a recognition in the East as in the West, which would have united the whole world again under a Roman rule, that the death of Beorhtric opened a way for the exile's return to Wessex.

Britain and the Empire.

The years that had passed since his flight had made little change in the state of Britain. In 794 Offa had at last been enabled to complete his realm in Mid-Britain by the murder of the East-Anglian king, Æthelberht, and the seizure of his land;[1] but from that moment to his death in 796 he was occupied in the founding of what was destined to be one of the greatest of English abbeys on a spot hallowed by the death of St. Alban near the ruins of the Roman Verulamium, and in dealing with a fresh Kentish revolt. The revolt was only quelled by his successor,

[1] Eng. Chron. a. 792 (4).

Stanford's Geographical Estab.

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Cenwulf.[1] Cenwulf secured the co-operation of the Kentish Primate in this work by a pledge to suppress the Mercian Archbishoprick; and in 803 Lichfield sank again into a suffragan see to the successors of Augustine.[2] But there was still no attempt to carry further the supremacy of Mercia. The history, indeed, of the Midland kingdom is at this point little more than a blank. All dreams of ambition at home must in fact have been hushed in the sense of a common danger, as men followed step by step the progress of the new ruler of Western Christendom. Charles had remained to the last on terms of peace and friendship with Offa;[3] but the death of the Mercian king, the war of Mercia with Kent, and the murder of King Æthelred by the Northumbrian thegns, afforded in 796 an opening for intervention, which seems only to have been averted by the persuasion of Alcuin.[4] The danger, though staved off for the time, must have deepened to English minds when four years later Charles mounted the Imperial throne. His coronation as Emperor had a mean-

[1] In 798. Eng. Chron. a. 796.

[2] For letters of Cenwulf and Leo III. on this matter see Stubbs and Haddan, Councils, 521, 523. For final act of the council which did away with the archbishoprick, ibid. p. 542.

[3] Letter of Charles and Alcuin to Offa in 796. Stubbs and Haddan, Councils, iii. 496, 498.

[4] On the news of the murder "Carolus . . . in tantum iratus est contra gentem illam, ut ait, perfidam et perversam, et homicidam dominorum suorum, pejorem eam paganis existimat; ut, nisi ego intercessor essem pro eâ, quicquid eis boni abstrahere potuisset et mali machinari, jam fecisset." Alcuin to Offa, between April and July 796. Haddan and Stubbs, Councils, iii. 498.

ing for the English states which we are apt to forget. Britain had been lost to the Empire in the hour when the rest of the Western provinces were lost; and to men of that day it would seem natural enough that she should return to the Empire now that Rome had risen again to more than its old greatness in the West. Such a return, we can hardly doubt, was in the mind of Charles; and the revolutions which were distracting the English kingdoms told steadily towards it. When in 802[1] Ecgberht left the court of Charles and mounted the West-Saxon throne, Cenwulf stood silently by: and the peace which he maintained with the new ruler of Wessex throughout his reign suggests that this restoration had been brought about by diplomatic arrangement between the Emperor and the Mercian king.[2] Six years later a new step forward in the assertion of this supremacy was made by the new Empire. In 808[3] the Northumbrian king, Eardwulf, who had two years before been driven from his throne by a revolt of his subjects, appealed both to Pope and Emperor, and was brought back and restored to his throne by their envoys.[4]

[1] Eng. Chron. a. 800.

[2] It is possible that Cenwulf may have been hampered by a strife with Eardwulf of Northumbria about harbouring of exiles, which Simeon of Durham places in 801. Sim. Durh. Gest. Reg. a. 801.

[3] Sim. Durh. Hist. Dun. Ecc. ii. 5; Eng. Chron. (Peterborough), a. 806.

[4] Eginhard. Annal. a. 808. "Rex Nordhanhambrorum de Britanniâ insulâ, nomine Eardulf, regno et patria pulsus, ad

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But though we are thus told of the assertion of the Imperial supremacy in northern Britain, of the relations between Charles and the exile who had quitted his protection to become king of the West-Saxons we know nothing. The stay of Ecgberht at the Frankish court had left, as his after policy shows, a marked impression on him, and we may believe that the friendship which we find existing in later days between the West-Saxon house and that of Charles the Great had already begun. The first political enterprise of the new king at any rate was one which Charles himself might have suggested. The Bretons of Britanny were among the standing troubles of the Frankish realm, as the Britons of West-Wales were the standing trouble of the West-Saxon. A blow at the one was in great measure a blow at the other; and Lewis the Gentle, who in 814 succeeded his father Charles in the Imperial throne, must have looked on with approval as strife between the sprinkling of Englishmen who had recently settled in Devon and the Welsh who still held their ground across the Tamar grew into a war which in 815 forced Ecgberht to march into the heart of Cornwall.[1] After eight years of fighting his attack proved successful; the last fragment of British dominion in the west came to an end; and the whole of Dyvnaint owned the supremacy of the West-Saxon King. The conquest of

Imperatorem dum adhuc Noviomagi moraretur venit, et patefacto adventus sui negotio, Romam proficiscitur, Româque rediens per legatos Romani Pontificis et domini Imperatoris in regnum suum reducitur." See Letters of Leo III. in Stubbs and Haddan, Councils, iii. 562—565.

[1] Eng. Chron. a. 813, 823.

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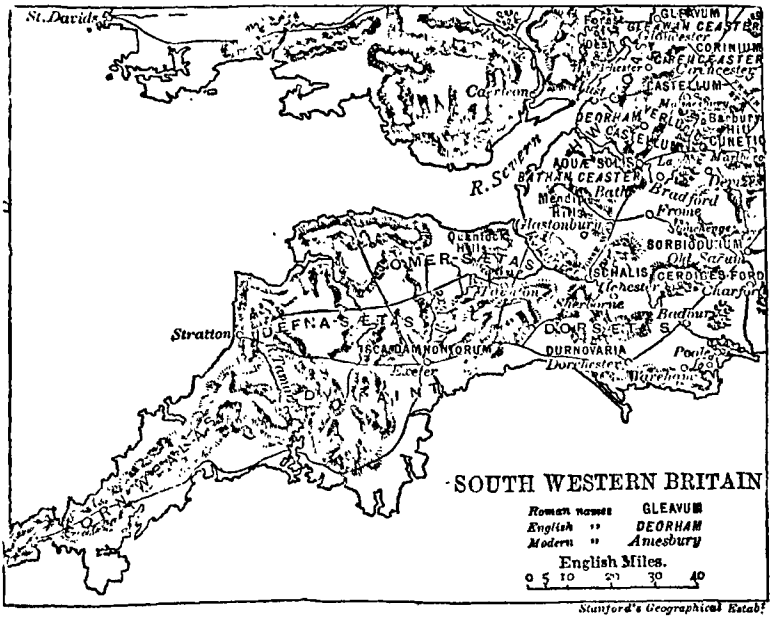
Cornwall marks a fresh stage in the long warfare between Briton and Englishman. As a nation Britain had passed away with the victories of Deorham and Chester: what was left were four British peoples, the Britons of Cornwall, of Central Wales, of Cumbria, and of Strath-Clyde. In the two hundred years which had elapsed since Æthelfrith's victory, three of these



had bowed to the English sway. Ecgfrith had put an end to the independence of Cumbria. Under Eadberht Northumbria had brought her strife with Strath-Clyde to a close by the subjection of these northern Britons and the capture of Alcluyd. In Central Wales Offa's conquest of the tract between the Severn and the Dyke had been followed by a payment of tribute on the part of the chieftains to the westward of it, which

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was a practical acknowledgement of their submission to the Mercian crown. Ecgberht's campaign brought the long struggle to an end by the reduction of the one British state which still remained unconquered; and the Britons of the south-western peninsula, after the successive losses of Somerset and Devon, saw the West-Saxons masters of their last strongholds from the Tamar to the Land's End.

Conquest of Mercia.

But the winning of West-Wales was the smallest result of Ecgberht's victories. The dread of Welsh hostility in their rear had formed till now the main check on any advance of the West-Saxons against their English neighbours; and not only was this check removed by the reduction of Cornwall, but it was removed at a moment when its internal condition allowed Wessex to take advantage of the liberty of action which it had gained, and when the civil discord which had so long torn the kingdom in pieces was hushed beneath the firm rule of Ecgberht. While Wessex too regained the strength it had lost through the past two centuries, its rival in Central Britain sank helplessly into the anarchy from which the southern kingdom had emerged. On Cenwulf's death[1] in 821 Mercia was torn with civil war; and the weakness this left behind it was seen when his successor took up the long interrupted strife with the West-Saxons. The war in Dyvnaint was hardly over when Beornwulf in 825 marched into Wiltshire. But the decisive repulse of his army at Ellandun[2] was the signal for a break up of the Mercian realm. All England south of the Thames submitted to the West-

[1] Eng. Chron. a. 819.

[2] Eng. Chron. a. 823.

Saxon King;[1] the East-Saxons over the river owned the rule of Wessex; and in Kent Ecgberht was able to set aside a native king who had seized its throne in the hour of Mercia's defeat. Others were doing his work in Mid-Britain itself. The overthrow of Ellandun was followed by a desperate rising against Beornwulf's sway along the eastern coast. Mercia, spent by its earlier overthrow, was utterly exhausted by two victories of the East-Anglians; two of its kings in succession fell fighting on East-Anglian soil;[2] and a third, Wiglaf, had hardly mounted the throne when Ecgberht saw that the hour had come for a decisive onset. In 828 the West-Saxon army crossed the Thames; Wiglaf fled helplessly before it; and the realm of Penda and of Offa bowed without a struggle to its conqueror.

Submission of Northumbria.

But Ecgberht had wider dreams of conquest than those of supremacy over Mercia alone; and setting an under-king on its throne, he marched in the following year to the attack of Northumbria. In the silence of her annals we know not why the realm which seventy years before had beaten back Æthelbald, and which had since carried its conquests to the Clyde, now yielded without a blow to Ecgberht's summons. The weariness of half a century of anarchy had no doubt done much to break the spirit of northern independence, while terror of the pirates who were harrying the Northumbrian coast may have strengthened the dim longing for internal unity which was growing up under the influence of the Church. But whatever may have been the causes of their action, the North-

[1] Eng. Chron. a. 823.

[2] Eng. Chron. a. 823, 825.

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umbrian thegns met Ecgberht on their border, at Dore, in Derbyshire, and owned him as their over-lord.[1] There is something startling in so quiet and uneventful a close to the struggles of two hundred years. For with the submission of Northumbria the work that Oswiu and Æthelbald had failed to do was done. In a revolution which seemed sudden, but which was in reality the inevitable close of the growth of natural consciousness through these centuries of English history, the old severance of people from people had at last been broken down; and the whole English race in Britain was for the first time knit together under a single ruler. Though the legend which made Ecgberht take the title of King of England is an invention of later times, it expressed an historic truth. Long and bitter as the struggle for separate existence was still to be in Mid-Britain and the North, it was a struggle that never wholly undid the work which his sword had done; and from the moment when the Northumbrian thegns bowed to their West-Saxon over-lord, England was made in fact if not as yet in name.

[1] Eng. Chron. a. 827.

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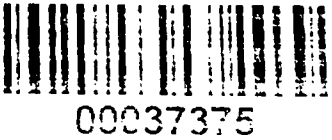
R. CLAY, SONS, AND TAYLOR,
BREAD STREET HILL.



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